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**ELIZABETH'S
CONQUESTS**

Tudor England tested by
Europe's superpowers

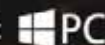
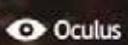
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Welcome

“Every German soldier must be made to feel that he is living under the muzzle of a Russian gun”

– Vasily Chuikov, Commander,
62nd Army, Stalingrad

This year marks 75 years since Field Marshal Paulus surrendered the Sixth Army at Stalingrad, a moment regarded as the most important turning point in the war against Nazi Germany. The preceding months of fighting had produced the highest number of casualties in the entire war, as Axis and Soviet forces engaged in deadly close-quarter combat among the city's ruins.

General Chuikov's words to his men during the early months of the battle reflect just how tenacious the defending Soviets would eventually prove to be. By 1943 the German invaders had become entirely encircled in the

city, and some 91,000 men were taken prisoner. The Red Army had turned a stalwart defence into a crushing offensive victory.



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TOM GARNER

This issue Tom spoke with MPs and families for the new book *Led By Lions*, which re-investigates the service of politicians during WWI (p. 40). Also, you can find the second part of his gripping interview with Burma veteran Dr Robert Callow (p. 48).



JAMES HOARE

Although dismissed as a mere sideshow to the Western and Eastern Fronts, the 1914 Serbian campaign was a critical theatre of the war, as History of War's group editor-in-chief explores in this first part of his new series (p. 58).



WILLIAM WELSH

In this issue's Great Battles, William investigates the Siege of Khe Sanh, which began 50 years ago this month. The clash saw isolated US marines pinned down and fighting for their lives during the early months of the Tet Offensive (p. 70).

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Brutal close-quarters fighting rages in the ruined houses of Stalingrad



Image: Alamy

STALINGRAD

NAZI GRAVEYARD

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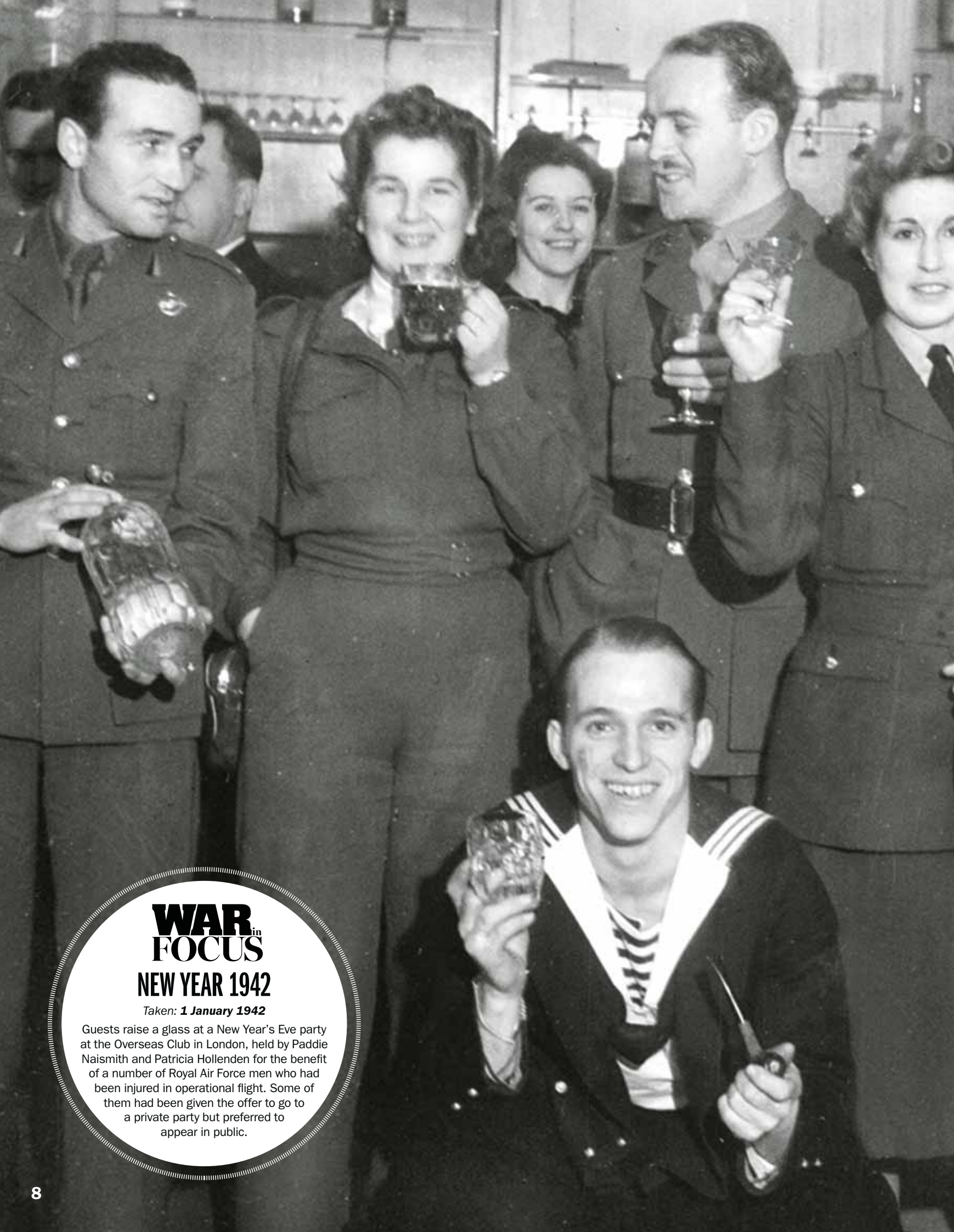
WAR **in** **FOCUS** **UNDER FIRE**

Taken: April 1991

An oil well burns brightly in the Kuwaiti desert, silhouetting an abandoned Iraqi tank during the First Gulf War. After the American-led coalition launched Operation Desert Storm to liberate annexed Kuwait, retreating Iraqi forces set hundreds of wells on fire. Many of these fires burned uncontrollably for several months.







**WARⁱⁿ
FOCUS**
NEW YEAR 1942

Taken: 1 January 1942

Guests raise a glass at a New Year's Eve party at the Overseas Club in London, held by Paddie Naismith and Patricia Hollenden for the benefit of a number of Royal Air Force men who had been injured in operational flight. Some of them had been given the offer to go to a private party but preferred to appear in public.







WARⁱⁿ FOCUS

STORMING THE HEIGHT 285

Painted: 1915

Height 285, known in French as 'La skin Chevauchée', was the highest elevation of the Allied main ridge along the Argonne during WWI. This ridge held huge strategic advantages for both the French and the Germans, who each committed massive assaults to contest the position over the course of the war.





WARⁱⁿ FOCUS

ALUMINIUM FOR VICTORY

Taken: c. 1940

Men and boys sift through a mountain of pots and pans donated by the British public towards the war effort. In 1940 Lord Beaverbrook launched an appeal for aluminium to help build fighter planes, and the public responded with kitchenware, containers and anything that could be used.



A full-page photograph showing a soldier in a combat uniform crouching in a trench, operating a 120mm mortar. The mortar is firing a round, with a large plume of white smoke and a bright orange flame at the base. The soldier is wearing a helmet and is positioned behind a sandbagged parapet. The background features rugged, snow-dusted mountains under a clear blue sky.

WARⁱⁿ **FOCUS**

HIGH-ALTITUDE FIRE

Taken: 26 January 2011

American soldiers fire a 120mm mortar round during operations against Taliban fighters in Kunar Province, northeastern Afghanistan.

Observation Post Mustang is located over 2,000 metres (6,500 feet) above sea level, high in the Hindu Kush mountains close to the border with Pakistan.



TIMELINE OF... ELIZABETHAN WARS

The defeat of the Spanish Armada transformed Elizabeth I into 'Gloriana', but the majority of her reign oversaw humiliating English defeats that are little known today

SPANISH ARMADA

The most famous military event of Elizabeth's reign is the naval defeat of Philip II of Spain's huge invasion fleet. Over one-third of the Spanish ships are lost against English ships, but stormy weather in the North and Irish seas destroys more of the 'Invincible Armada' than the English fleet.

July - August 1588

October 1562 - June 1563

SIEGE OF LE HAVRE

5,000 English soldiers occupy the French port in the hope that Protestant Huguenots will return Calais to the English crown. But the garrison is poorly supplied and devastated by plague while the Huguenots switch sides. After a heavy bombardment the English agree to withdraw but are attacked during their maritime evacuation by French ships.



Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick led the English defence at Le Havre but never believed that the garrison would succeed. He wrote to Elizabeth, "I fear you are much too abused in the good opinion you have in the strength of this town"

1585 - 1587

THE DUTCH REVOLT

In a show of solidarity with Protestant Dutch rebels in the Spanish Netherlands, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester commands an official expedition to fight in the Low Countries. English military successes are few, but their presence saves the United Provinces from a Spanish reconquest.



Leicester's badly trained army suffered several defeats against the Spanish in the Netherlands, including the Siege of Grave in 1586

1585 - 1604

ANGLO-SPANISH WAR

Although war is never formally declared, England and Spain fight for almost 20 years on land and sea. England achieves the most famous victories, but there are successes and defeats on both sides, and the conflict eventually ends in a stalemate shortly after Elizabeth's death.



Numerous engagements took place at sea, including the Battle of Flores in 1591 when an English squadron was defeated after attacking a Spanish treasure fleet



The vanguard of the English fleet engages the Spanish Armada, causing disruption to Medina Sidonia's fleet

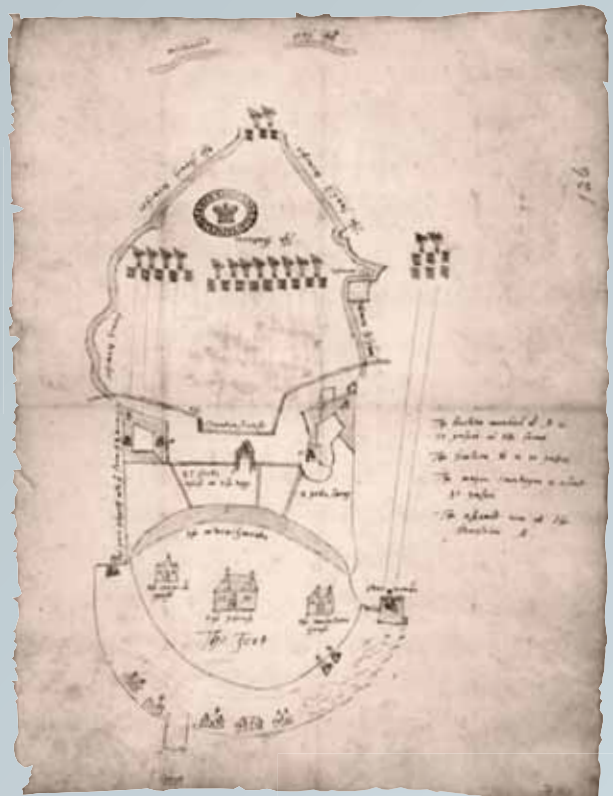
"STORMY WEATHER IN THE NORTH AND IRISH SEAS DESTROYED MORE OF THE 'INVINCIBLE ARMADA' THAN THE ENGLISH FLEET"

Sir John Norreys (inset), the English commander in France, drew this pencil sketch of a Spanish fort during the Siege of Fort Crozon in 1594



EXPEDITIONS TO FRANCE

Elizabeth I militarily support the Protestant Henry IV in his fight for the French throne against Spanish and domestic opposition. English troops operate in Normandy and Brittany but with little concrete success and high casualties.



NINE YEARS' WAR

The longest and most destructive war of Elizabeth's reign occurs in Ireland, where the English struggle to contain a rebellion against their rule by Gaelic Irish chieftains such as Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone.

The military reputation of Elizabeth's favourite Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex was ruined by his failure to defeat Irish rebels despite boastful claims



Spring - June 1589

ENGLISH ARMADA

In response to the failed Spanish invasion, the English send their own 'armada' to the Iberian Peninsula in 1589 to spread chaos in occupied Portugal. However, low supplies lead to a disastrous march to Lisbon. The English return home with the humiliating loss of 40 ships and 15,000 men.

María Pita was a Spanish heroine of the siege of A Coruña, who killed an English standard-bearer after her husband was shot by a crossbow



1589 - 1592

April 1593 - 31 March 1603

14 August 1598

BATTLE OF THE YELLOW FORD

The worst defeat of Elizabeth's reign occurs in Ireland. 800 English troops are killed, 400 wounded and 300 Irish soldiers desert after an ambush attack by the rebellious army of the earl of Tyrone. It is the greatest Irish battlefield victory against an English force.

Below: A contemporary English depiction of the Battle of the Yellow Ford in County Armagh. The Irish victory spread the previously regional rebellion across the whole of Ireland

Right: The Earl of Tyrone



Images: Alamy

ELIZABETH I'S EUROPEAN WARS

England's 'Gloriana' sent troops across Western Europe by land and sea to defend her kingdom, support fellow Protestants and quash rebellions

1 BATTLE OF ZUTPHEN

ZUTPHEN, GELDERLAND, NETHERLANDS

22 SEPTEMBER 1586

The strategically important town of Zutphen is besieged by an Anglo-Dutch army, and a Spanish convoy is despatched. An English ambush subsequently falls upon the Spanish infantry, resulting in the death of the famous poet Sir Philip Sidney.

2 "SINGING THE KING OF SPAIN'S BEARD"

BAY OF CÁDIZ, SPAIN

12 APRIL-6 JULY 1587

In a pre-emptive strike before the launch of the Spanish Armada, Sir Francis Drake leads an English fleet to disrupt Spanish plans. Drake strikes the Spanish fleet at Cádiz and destroys 33 ships, before attacking Portuguese targets on the way home.

3 BATTLE OF GRAVELINES

GRAVELINES, NORD, FRANCE

29 JULY 1588

The decisive battle of the Spanish Armada occurs off the northern French coast when the English deploy fire ships against the Spanish fleet. The English then use their nimble ships to fire at the Spanish while avoiding fighting at close quarters. The weather then blows the Spanish Armada into the perilous North Sea, where they incur heavy losses.



The Gravelines attack prevented the Armada from linking up with land forces in the Spanish Netherlands

The Siege of Bergen-op-Zoom was an Anglo-Dutch victory against the Spanish, but the English performance in the Netherlands was mixed and underwhelming



BATTLE OF THE YELLOW FORD

14 AUGUST 1598

BLACKWATER, COUNTY ARMAGH, IRELAND

SIEGE OF BERGEN OP ZOOM

23 SEPTEMBER-13 NOVEMBER 1588

BERGEN OP ZOOM, BRABANT, NETHERLANDS

SIEGE OF SLUIS

12 JUNE-4 AUGUST 1587

SLUIS, ZEELAND, NETHERLANDS

BATTLE OF THE NARROW SEAS

3-4 OCTOBER 1602

STRAIT OF DOVER, ENGLISH CHANNEL

BATTLE OF CASTLEHAVEN

6 DECEMBER 1601

OFF CASTLEHAVEN, COUNTY CORK, IRELAND

BATTLE OF ARQUES

15-18 SEPTEMBER 1589

ARQUES-LA-BATAILLE, NORMANDY, FRANCE

SIEGE OF LE HAVRE

OCTOBER 1562-JUNE 1563

LE HAVRE, NORMANDY, FRANCE

RAID ON MOUNT'S BAY

2-4 AUGUST 1595

MOUNT'S BAY, CORNWALL, ENGLAND

CAPTURE OF GEERTRUIDENBERG

10 APRIL 1589

GEERTRUIDENBERG, BRABANT, NETHERLANDS

CAPTURE OF BREDA

4 MARCH 1590

BREDA, NORTH BRABANT, NETHERLANDS

CAPTURE OF AXEL

17 JULY 1586

AXEL, ZEELAND, NETHERLANDS

4 ELIZABETH I'S SPEECH AT TILBURY

TILBURY, ESSEX, ENGLAND

19 AUGUST 1588

During the threat of the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth I passionately declares to her army, "I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm."



Left: A beacon signal station at Culmstock, Devon, that was built in 1588 to warn when the Spanish Armada was sighted

SIEGE OF MORLAIX

6-17 SEPTEMBER 1594

MORLAIX, BRITTANY, FRANCE

BATTLE OF BLAYE

18 APRIL 1593

OFF BLAYE, GIRONDE ESTUARY, FRANCE

SIEGE OF FORT CROZON

1 OCTOBER-19 NOVEMBER 1594

POINTE DES ESPAGNOIS, BRITTANY, FRANCE

7 THIRD SPANISH ARMADA

CORNWALL, ENGLISH CHANNEL

18 OCTOBER-15 NOVEMBER 1597

A third and final armada is launched against England while the English are militarily distracted in Ireland. The armada sails within sight of the Lizard in Cornwall while English ships commanded by Essex are in the Azores. However, plans to capture southern English ports are ruined by fierce storms, and the armada returns to Spain.

SECOND SPANISH ARMADA

29 OCTOBER-1 NOVEMBER 1596

CAPE FINISTERE, ATLANTIC OCEAN

8 SIEGE OF KINSALE

KINSALE, COUNTY CORK, IRELAND

2 OCTOBER 1601-3 JANUARY 1602

Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone is decisively defeated by Baron Mountjoy after Irish rebels march to relieve 3,800 besieged Spanish troops at Kinsale. The Spanish are forced to surrender, and the English victory effectively completes the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland.

9 BATTLE OF SESIMBRA BAY

SESIMBRA BAY, PORTUGAL

3 JUNE 1602

This naval battle is the result of the last expedition sent to Spain on the orders of Elizabeth I. Sir Richard Leveson destroys two Spanish galleons and returns to England with a captured carrack. Its cargo is valued at £43,851.

"I KNOW I HAVE THE BODY OF A WEAK, FEEBLE WOMAN; BUT I HAVE THE HEART AND STOMACH OF A KING, AND OF A KING OF ENGLAND TOO"

5 CAPTURE OF CÁDIZ

BAY OF CÁDIZ, SPAIN

30 JUNE-15 JULY 1596

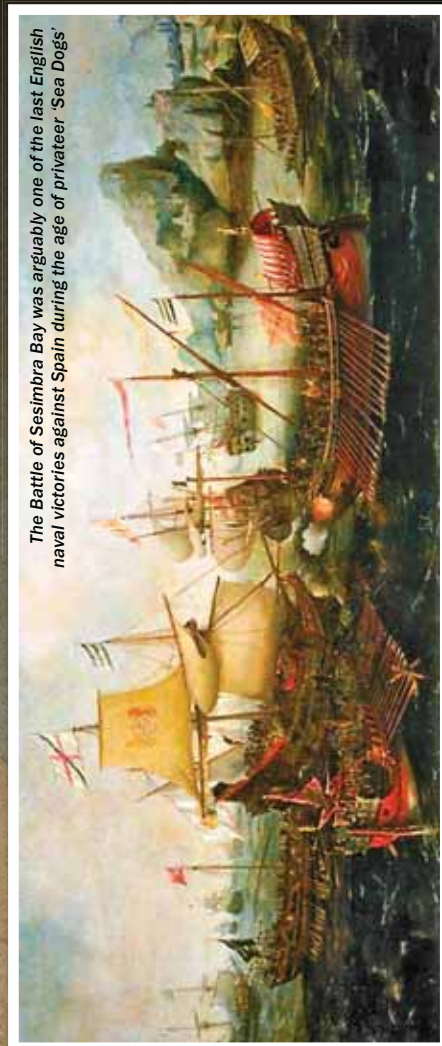
As in 1588, news of a second Spanish Armada leads the English to once again attack Cádiz, this time under the command of the Earl of Essex. Several Spanish galleons are destroyed or captured and Essex occupies the city. Although the English leave Cádiz in flames, the Spanish are still able to launch their second armada.

6 SIEGE OF AMIENS

AMIENS, PICARDY, FRANCE

13 MAY-25 SEPTEMBER 1597

4,000 English and Dutch soldiers assist the then Protestant Henry IV of France to retake Amiens from the Spanish. After a long siege, Amiens is finally taken and the French war with Spain ends, along with the infamous 'Wars of Religion'.



The Battle of Sesimbra Bay was arguably one of the last English naval victories against Spain during the age of privateer 'Sea Dogs'

FAMOUS BATTLE

Below: English soldiers storm the walls of Cádiz after finding a weak point

CÁDIZ 1596

Fearing a second Armada, an Anglo-Dutch force set sail from England in June 1596 in search of plunder and glory



The destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588 overshadows all other events in the undeclared Anglo-Spanish War of 1585-1604. It was certainly a significant defeat

for the Spanish, but it neither ended the war nor allayed English fears of a Spanish invasion.

By 1596 those fears were rising once more, but opinion was divided on how the war should be prosecuted. The queen and her advisors favoured raids, protection of important continental ports and limited commitment of troops in the Low Countries. Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex and a favourite of the queen, argued instead that ports and cities should be captured from the Spanish and held. The Port of Cádiz, where a new Spanish fleet was believed to be massing, was seen by both sides of the argument as a suitable target. The city itself and any merchant vessels found there would make for a profitable raid, while Essex saw it as a potential stronghold to take the fight to the Spanish.

The voyage to Cádiz

An Anglo-Dutch fleet of around 110 ships, including 47 warships, set sail from England on 3 June 1596, carrying eight regiments of infantry (around 6,450 soldiers in total). Command was split between Essex and Charles Howard.

The fleet was spotted on 15 June, but Spanish organisation was poor and reinforcements were only beginning to reach Cádiz as the fleet approached three days later. Only 350 soldiers were available to defend the city, while Spanish naval forces stretched to around 32 warships.

The capture of an Irish ship leaving the port revealed that a huge merchant fleet was inside the bay, causing sailors to dance with delight at the thought of the prizes on offer. The advantage of surprise, however, was thrown away, as the English bogged themselves down in endless councils about how to proceed, and larger numbers of reinforcements had started to arrive by the time the attack finally started.

The plan of attack

The original plan called for a landing of troops to capture the city, but bad weather made this impossible and instead the fleet was hurled against the Spanish defenders on 21 June. Events of the naval engagement are confused due to the contradictory nature of the various accounts, issued by men eager to secure

their share (or more) of credit for the victory. What is clear is that English gunnery proved greatly superior to that of the Spaniards, who eventually cracked after a three-hour exchange of cannon fire.

Sir Walter Raleigh boarded the Spanish flagship San Phillipe and the naval battle was effectively over. Incredibly, not a single British sailor had been lost during the exchange of fire (although there were a number of casualties, including Raleigh himself, who was struck in the leg by a splinter). Spanish losses were much higher, as many men drowned when they abandoned their ships, struggling to shore through mud and water.

The prize

The merchant fleet, worth as much as 12 million ducats by some estimates, was now at the mercy of the Anglo-Dutch force, but instead the city of Cádiz became the focus. Essex, under encouragement from Sir Francis Vere, mustered a little less than 2,000 men and approached the shore, oars dipping in time to the beating of a drum. Impressed by the ominous and calm approach, the Spanish defenders of the fort guarding the shore fled without offering resistance, allowing Essex to quickly organise his men on the beach.

Sending the bulk of his force to cut off the stream of reinforcements to the city, he took around 800 to scout out Cádiz itself. After narrowly failing to follow retreating Spaniards through the gates, Essex and Vere probed both flanks of the city walls, each finding weak spots and getting into the city around the same time. Fierce street fighting followed, but the city had effectively fallen before Howard arrived with the second wave of infantry.

A chance lost

The failure to capture the merchant fleet would become a raging controversy, with Howard bearing the brunt of the blame. Essex insisted he had advised Howard to capture the fleet, but reinforcing the attack on Cádiz made sense as well. In any event, given a brief respite, the Spanish took the decision to burn their fleet rather than allow it to fall into English hands.

Cádiz had fallen, and a hefty ransom of 120,000 ducats was extracted for the safety of the populace (not to mention proceeds from the subsequent sacking of the town), but the vast wealth that had been within the expedition's grasp had proved elusive.

“WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT BRITISH GUNNERY PROVED GREATLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE SPANIARDS, WHO EVENTUALLY CRACKED AFTER A THREE-HOUR EXCHANGE OF CANNON FIRE”

Left: An engraving of the assault on Cádiz, detailing both naval and land operations



CÁDIZ REVISITED

THE RAID OF 1596 WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME THE SPANISH PORT HAD ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF ENGLAND

Cádiz had been attacked by an English force earlier in the war, when Sir Francis Drake had led an expedition in 1587, attempting to prevent the build-up of an invasion fleet. The raid was a stunning success, with plans for the armada pushed back a year. Drake's raid was notable for the decisiveness of his actions. Upon reaching Cádiz he launched an assault immediately, quickly sailing his vessels into the harbour and causing panic among the Spanish defenders. Only one of his ships was lost, while more than 30 Spanish vessels were destroyed.

Despite the success of the raid, Drake himself accepted that he had done nothing but postpone the plans of Philip II, referring to the action as merely “singeing the King of Spain's beard”.

The financial damage inflicted in 1596 was more substantial and pushed the Spanish towards one of their regular declarations of bankruptcy. However, as in Drake's raid, the 1596 expedition was not enough to halt Spanish plans for an armada. A second mighty fleet of ships was ready to attempt an invasion of England just four months later, but was destroyed by autumnal storms.

Sir Francis Drake, architect of the devastating raid on Cádiz in 1587



Images: Alamy

CONTROVERSY AT CÁDIZ

This successful raid was immediately followed by a scramble for glory – and an inquiry over where all the money had gone

The 1596 raid on Cádiz was a lesson in the dangers of a divided command. Although Spanish leadership at Cádiz was also weak (the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who had commanded the Spanish Armada, was technically in command but seemed paralysed at the approach of the Anglo-Dutch fleet) it did not come close to the levels of infighting and jostling for position seen in the English forces.

Not only did this impact on the organisation and implementation of the raid, it had dire financial consequences – the personal rivalries may have been at the heart of the failure to capture the Spanish merchantmen in the harbour.

A matter of honour

The thirst for personal honour was not seen as objectionable at the time. Officers would compete brazenly for favour and glory, often to the detriment of the service itself. This was seldom more evident than at the capture of Cádiz, where it reached almost comical levels.

Raleigh and Essex were each determined to lead the naval assault into the Bay of Cádiz, and Essex fumed when he was assigned a backup role. Raleigh was so jealous of his position, he actually positioned his ship, the Warspite, broadside-on to the fleet to prevent other English ships from passing him but, being inexperienced in warfare, he was too far from the enemy to properly engage them (a big part of the reason casualties were so low among the English).

“RALEIGH AND ESSEX WERE EACH DETERMINED TO LEAD THE NAVAL ASSAULT INTO THE BAY OF CÁDIZ, AND ESSEX FUMED WHEN HE WAS ASSIGNED A BACKUP ROLE”

Image: Alamy



As a committed enemy of Essex, Sir Robert Cecil was able to influence the queen's treatment of her old favourite

Sir Francis Vere attempted to attach a cable to Warspite and drag his own ship past it, but Raleigh, spotting the subterfuge, immediately cut the cable. Likewise, Essex's insistence on getting involved in the naval engagement, when he was supposed to be readying troops for a landing, was cited by some as a cause for the delayed capture of the city and the subsequent loss of the merchant fleet.

The scramble for personal glory continued after the expedition started its voyage home. Just about every man who could pen or dictate a letter sent accounts of the fighting back to England – accounts that inevitably placed themselves at the centre of events.

The queen, seething at the loss of the main prize on offer, the fabulously valuable merchant fleet, quickly lost her patience with the posturing and declared it illegal to publish any account of the battle. She also instigated an inquiry into exactly how the main prize had been missed.

Army versus navy

Always willing to ignore authority, Essex attempted to publish his own “true relacion [sic] of the action”, and resorted to distributing manuscript copies when this attempt failed.

Still, the war of words continued. There was a bitter dividing line between the army, which had sated its appetite for plunder in the city of Cádiz, and the navy, which had been left mostly empty-handed.

The tide of opinion in the court was against Essex, who was also unpopular for proposing the risky and probably unfeasible plan of seizing and holding permanent bases in Spain. The queen's key advisors, Sir Robert Cecil (who became principal secretary of state in 1598) and his father, Lord Burghley, were distrustful of Essex. Consequently, they favoured his rivals,

Raleigh and Howard. An official account of the raid on Cádiz (which was never published) played up Raleigh's role at the expense of Essex, and Howard was made the Earl of Nottingham after returning home, sending Essex into a sulk.

The forgotten raid

The political infighting, simmering resentment over the loss of millions of pounds worth of prizes and increasing exasperation with the antics of Essex meant that the largely successful raid was temporarily expunged from history. A major work by the historian Richard Hakluyt, scheduled for publication at the end of 1598, was recalled to have a detailed account of the Cádiz expedition removed entirely.

The controversy only began to die down following the execution of Essex in 1601. That same year a book by John Stow included a description of the raid very similar to that proposed by Hakluyt. After the death of the queen herself, the political bitterness had left the affair and the raid was resurrected as part of a new national myth, that of the daring ‘sea dogs’ of Elizabethan England.

The glory went to Raleigh, Drake and other notables such as Sir John Hawkins, while Essex, whose reputation was only slowly rehabilitating, was left out.

“THE CONTROVERSY ONLY BEGAN TO DIE DOWN FOLLOWING THE EXECUTION OF ESSEX IN 1601”

Sir Walter Raleigh went to extraordinary lengths to prevent other commanders from sharing the glory at Cádiz

Below: Raleigh's ship, Warspite, depicted on a collectible cigarette card in the act of engaging the Spanish at Cádiz



Image: Alamy

IN THE RANKS

The new order was pushing out the old among the men who fought during the late Tudor period

During a period of military innovation, the battlefield was transforming and gunpowder weaponry was firmly in the ascendancy. As technological advancements were made, artillery became increasingly important both on land and at sea. The days of heavy cavalry commanding the field were gone, and armies increased in size and artillery, arquebuses and muskets began to dominate.

“LIFE FOR THE COMMON SAILOR WAS HARD, WHETHER IN THE NAVY OR IN A PRIVATELY OWNED VESSEL”

ENGLISH SAILOR

AS WELL AS CREWING HIS SHIP, AN ENGLISH TAR WOULD BE EXPECTED TO FIGHT WHEN BATTLE WAS JOINED

Life for the common sailor was hard, whether in the navy or in a privately owned vessel, but it got even harder when a ship sailed into battle. Not only was the boarding of enemy vessels and defending against enemy intruders essential, sailors were also used as a valuable auxiliary force for land operations.

During the raid on Cádiz in 1596, for example, the rather small official army of around 6,450 men was supplemented by around 1,300 sailors, formed into an ad hoc ‘naval brigade’.

English sailors weren't simply skilled seamen: they could operate artillery and fight effectively hand to hand



Tercio – meaning 'a third' – units originally comprised three equal parts of swordsmen, pikemen and arquebusiers

“THE INTRODUCTION OF SMALL ARMS TO THE BATTLEFIELD, IN THE FORM OF THE ARQUEBUS (AND LATER THE MUSKET), REQUIRED A RETHINK ON MILITARY TACTICS”

SPANISH PIKEMAN

THE ELIZABETHAN ERA WAS THE GOLDEN AGE FOR THE MIGHTY SPANISH PIKE FORMATIONS

The introduction of small arms to the battlefield, in the form of the arquebus (and later the musket), required a rethink on military tactics. The mighty Spanish tercios of the 16th and 17th centuries combined pike and arquebus in huge formations that dominated European battlefields until the mid 1600s.

Spanish pikemen wielded 5.5-metre (18-foot) pikes, giving the tercios both offensive and defensive capabilities, until advances in field artillery rendered them obsolete.

Arquebusiers needed to be disciplined and highly skilled

ENGLISH ARTILLERYMAN

THE SCIENCE OF ARTILLERY MADE LARGE STRIDES DURING THE ELIZABETHAN ERA

Gunnery was fairly rudimentary at the start of Elizabeth I's reign, but steady improvements were made. By the end of the 1570s, the addition of front sights on cannon barrels (simply pieces of straw attached with wax) and the use of quadrants to judge muzzle elevation had greatly improved accuracy.

Practice was essential to the effective handling of a gun, but even when using a brand new piece, an experienced crew could have a good grasp of their gun's accuracy after as little as two shots. Gunners also became expert at estimating the quality of gunpowder from its appearance (dry was obviously best), taste, texture and colour.

By the end of Elizabeth's reign, cannons were divided into categories for different tasks, with the largest (double cannon and demi-cannon) being used as siege guns, quarter cannons and culverins for defence of fortifications, and sakers, falcons and falconettes (as well as some culverins) for field use. Culverins and demi-culverins were the most common gun sizes for use at sea, along with many smaller anti-personnel weapons, such as robinets, bases and fowlers.

Elizabeth's reign saw the use of artillery advance dramatically

SPANISH ARQUEBUSIER

THE FORERUNNER OF THE MUSKETEER, THE ARQUEBUSIER BEGAN THE PROCESS OF PUSHING THE PIKEMAN INTO THE HISTORY BOOKS

Although the Spanish army would begin to look antiquated by the middle of the 17th century, during the Elizabethan era it was formidable and at the cutting edge of military technology. Arquebuses (primitive forerunners of the musket), allowed Spanish tercio formations to pack an offensive punch.

Of critical importance was the ability to reload and fire under pressure, and arquebusiers needed to keep an eye on enemy soldiers (especially cavalry) and fall back into the ranks of pikemen for protection when necessary.



Images: Alamy, Getty

HEROES & COMMANDERS

An ineffectual commander, Medina Sidonia attracted criticism wherever he went

Spain and England could call on distinguished commanders during their long but undeclared war

SIR FRANCIS VERE 1560-1609 ENGLISH ARMY

In a period where English military glory was reserved almost exclusively for the navy, Vere stood out as one of the finest soldiers of his day. Having made an uncertain start to his career under the hapless Earl of Leicester, he quickly carved out a formidable reputation, earning a knighthood in 1588.

Elizabeth's strategy aimed to maintain the balance of power in Europe, and English forces fought alongside those of Maurice of Nassau in support of Dutch independence. It was a time of change on the battlefield (some historians see events of the period as nothing less than a military revolution) and Vere proved naturally suited to commanding men, adapting his small force of English soldiers to the new tactics employed by Maurice.

His conspicuous participation in the raid on Cádiz in 1596 was followed by success at the Battle of Turnhout the following year, but his greatest triumph came at Nieuwpoort in 1600. In an aggressive campaign, Maurice of Nassau engaged a Spanish army riven by dissent and on the edge of mutiny, but the resulting battle was still a desperately close affair. Vere was given command of the best units in Maurice's army but had to watch as his English units were overpowered by

Spanish tercios (mixed formations of pikemen and arquebusiers). Even so, in dislodging the English, the Spanish forces became disorganised and were in turn routed by a cavalry charge.

Vere continued to serve in the Low Countries and was seriously wounded in 1602 at the Siege of Grave, when he was shot under his right eye. After a miraculous recovery he retired from active duty in 1604, turning his attention to writing his memoirs, which were published after his death.

Sir Francis Vere died in 1609 and was buried in Westminster Abbey

ALONSO PÉREZ DE GUZMÁN, DUKE OF MEDINA SIDONIA 1550-1615 SPANISH NAVY

Although much of the blame for the failure of the Spanish Armada's mission to invade England has been piled on the Duke of Medina Sidonia, there are mitigating circumstances. Medina Sidonia himself did not want the command, citing his lack of experience and tendency towards sea-sickness, but Philip II insisted (some historians have claimed the

king wanted a malleable, unimaginative figure at the head of the fleet).

Nevertheless, he did valuable work in strengthening and organising the fleet, which was undoubtedly in a better condition as it embarked on its mission than it had been before he took over. Bad luck, a lack of coordination with the Duke of Parma (commanding the large army awaiting transport to England) and determined English resistance doomed the Armada to failure, but Medina Sidonia remained in royal favour. He played an inglorious role in the raid on Cádiz, where his leadership was again criticised.

"HE DID VALUABLE WORK IN STRENGTHENING AND ORGANISING THE FLEET, WHICH WAS UNDOUBTEDLY IN A BETTER CONDITION AS IT EMBARKED ON ITS MISSION THAN IT HAD BEEN BEFORE HE TOOK OVER"

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE 1540-1596 ENGLISH NAVY

Drake's dual role, as both explorer and privateer, meant that his career as a military man coincided with his endeavours as an important and distinguished explorer. He circumnavigated the globe from 1577-1580, for which he was knighted, and claimed California for England, but he also acted very much like a pirate in actions against Spanish and Portuguese territories – actions which were condoned by the queen, but which she had no real control over.

Often working hand-in-glove with his second cousin, Sir John Hawkins, his military star ascended with the Spanish preparations for an invasion of England. In 1587 he launched a highly successful raid on Cádiz and followed it up the next year by commanding the English fleet against the Armada.

His end was ignominious, succumbing to dysentery during operations off Panama, and he was buried at sea just months before a second victory at Cádiz.



Drake depicted enjoying his game of bowls as news of the Armada is delivered

ALEXANDER FARNESE, DUKE OF PARMA 1545-1592 SPANISH ARMY

A half-brother to Philip II, Farnese's distinguished military career opened at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. By 1578 he was Captain-General of the Army of Flanders, engaged against rebellious Dutch forces. His policy of patient siege warfare, matched with offering generous terms for surrendering forces, allowed him to make great progress in the southern Netherlands, capturing one city after another.

Becoming Duke of Parma in 1586, he was placed in command of 30,000 men for an invasion of England, but poor coordination with the Duke of Medina Sidonia contributed to the failure of the Armada. It proved to be something of a turning point in his career, with his subsequent siege of Bergen Op Zoom a failure. After withdrawing from the Low Countries to take part in the War of the League (part of the French Wars of Religion), he died in 1592, with some blame for the Armada disaster still swirling around him.



A portrait of the young Alexander Farnese, at the age of 12

Images: Getty

ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER 1532-1588 ENGLISH ARMY

Few men played such an important role in the life of Elizabeth I as Robert Dudley. They were at one point both prisoners in the Tower of London and had a strong bond that brought them close to marriage.

Dudley was an important advisor to the queen and was made Earl of Leicester in order to make a proposed match with Mary Queen of Scots more palatable, but he was never in favour of such a union.

As a military man, Leicester had many faults, but he was keen to support the Dutch in their uprising against the Spanish (the Dutch Revolt, or Eighty Years' War). The Dutch also held him in high regard, but when he was appointed to command an English force of 6,000 men in the Low Countries, he proved to be inept. Within two years he was back home, close to bankruptcy but still retaining the queen's favour.

“FEW MEN PLAYED SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LIFE OF ELIZABETH I AS ROBERT DUDLEY. THEY WERE AT ONE POINT BOTH PRISONERS IN THE TOWER OF LONDON AND HAD A STRONG BOND THAT BROUGHT THEM CLOSE TO MARRIAGE”



Leicester, in the role of Governor-General of the United Provinces

STALIN

NAZI GRAVEYARD

During the final months of this deadly struggle, an entire army would crumble and the fortunes of war would permanently turn against Nazi Germany

WORDS NIK CORNISH

*The Battle of Stalingrad
lasted for several
months from 1942 until
February 1943*



STALINGRAD

It had not been one of the major objectives of the Axis's summer offensive of 1942, but by September that year Stalingrad had become the focal point of the Eastern Front, as its defenders simply refused to give up. This led to an increasing number of German troops being committed to its reduction. However, by 16 November 1942 what was to be Sixth German Army's final, desperate attempt to push the battered remains of the city's defenders from their blood-soaked toeholds on the western bank of the Volga River, ended.

Stalingrad was a model garden and industrial city that ran for 40 kilometres (25 miles) along

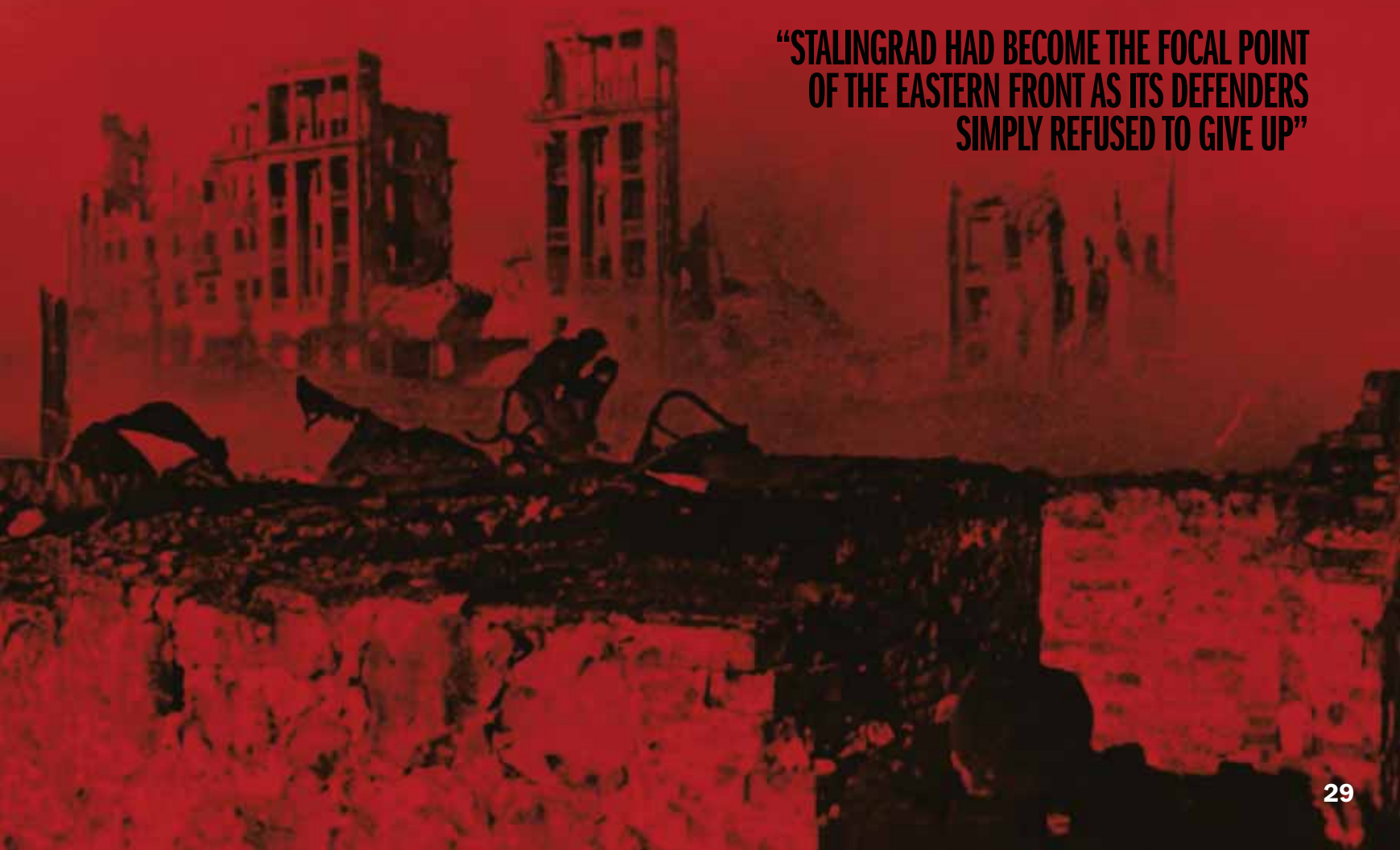
the western bank of the unbridged Volga River, which at some points reaches a width of 1,500 metres (4,900 feet). At roughly eight kilometres (five miles) wide the city was long and narrow, and was home to some 400,000 people. Much of the population worked in the large factory district located in the northern part of the city. Here the Dzerzhinsky tractor factory, Red October steel works, Silikat factory and the Barrikady artillery factory dominated the city's landscape.

South of the city centre the area was overlooked by the 102-metre (335-feet) high ancient burial mound Mamayev Kurgan, control of which would allow one side or the other the

perfect artillery position from which to dominate the city. Just to the south of the Mamayev Kurgan, near to the main ferry landing point, the Tsaritsa River ran along a narrow gorge into the Volga at 90 degrees. Beyond the city's suburbs the steppe stretched, undulating gently in all directions and rising gently to the west, where it met the Don River over 100 kilometres (62 miles) away.

Defending the rubble of central and northern Stalingrad were the men of the 62nd Army commanded by Lieutenant General V.I. Chuikov: to the south, a less industrialised area, was the 64th Army led by Major General M.S. Shumilov. By mid-November the Soviet troops in the city

“STALINGRAD HAD BECOME THE FOCAL POINT OF THE EASTERN FRONT AS ITS DEFENDERS SIMPLY REFUSED TO GIVE UP”





Following the end of their November attacks the German troops in and around the city resigned themselves to the prospect of another winter in the USSR. Their preparations for a quiet, relatively cosy Christmas were to prove overly optimistic



The assembly of men and machines for Operation Uranus was carefully undertaken. Movement into assembly areas took place mainly at night or during periods of bad weather. During October all civilians, other than those engaged in construction work, were evacuated as a further security measure



Across the lines outside of Stalingrad the Soviets had been building up two groups of armies. To the north was the Southwestern Front, to the south the Stalingrad Front. Don Front lay between them. Stalingrad's defenders, 62nd and 64th Armies were assigned to Stalingrad Front. Up to 700,000 men and 1,300 tanks now waited for orders

were reduced to holding pockets of varying sizes, like islands adrift in a sea of rubble, often connected only by the Volga, across which all their meagre supplies and reinforcements arrived. Yet, by some supreme act of desperation, bravery and tenacity they held on, grinding down their attackers in conditions that resembled those of Verdun.

Facing them, the German Sixth Army, under Lieutenant General Friedrich Paulus, and part of Army Group B (a sub-division of AGS) commanded by Colonel General Max von Weichs, had pushed eastwards from the city's outskirts, coming to within 500 metres (1,640 feet) of the Volga. There they had stalled, trapped in a nightmare landscape of their own air and artillery attacks' creation. Dependant on a supply line that stretched across the steppe to the Don River bridgeheads, particularly the railway crossing at Kalach 72 kilometres (45 miles) away, Sixth Army was exhausted but still anticipated victory. But they were unaware of the extent of the Soviet forces concentrating on their flanks.

Soviet planning

Planning for an ambitious counteroffensive in the Stalingrad area had been underway since 12 September. At a conference in Moscow, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov and Colonel General A.M. Vasilevsky suggested to Stalin that Sixth Army be encircled by thrusts through the left and right flanks that were defended by the Third and Fourth Romanian Armies respectively. Both Romanian forces were weak in armour and anti-tank weapons and were holding positions that were vulnerable and made poor use of the terrain. Armoured forces were to break through the Romanians, drive

across the steppe and then link up at Kalach. The distance to be covered by the northern arm was 128 kilometres (80 miles), the southern 97 kilometres (60 miles). Southwestern and Don Fronts (under commanders Lieutenant General N.F. Vatutin and Lieutenant General K.K. Rokossovsky respectively) were to comprise the northern thrust and Stalingrad Front would perform the southern thrust.

When the encirclement was complete, part of the force would face inwards to contain Sixth Army, and part outwards to prevent any relief effort that, it was anticipated, would come from the southwest. Stalin gave the plan his backing within 24 hours of its proposal. Code-named Operation Uranus, its start date was to be 9 November. In order to assemble the vast amount of men, weapons and supplies needed, it was decided that Stalingrad's defenders would only be allowed a minimum of reinforcements: everything possible was to be sent to the flanks.

Intelligence discounted

The Romanian Third Army, aware of some sort of Soviet build-up, requested permission in late October to liquidate the Soviet bridgeheads over the Don River at Serafimovich and

"THERE THEY HAD STALLED, TRAPPED IN A NIGHTMARE LANDSCAPE OF THEIR OWN AIR AND ARTILLERY ATTACKS' CREATION"

Kletskaaya, but the request was refused. German intelligence was convinced that the major Soviet offensive of the winter would be directed at Army Group Centre, which still threatened Moscow. Furthermore, Stalingrad itself appeared to be on the brink of capture and all Sixth Army's resources were focussed on that objective. Romanian Fourth Army, to the right, was equally concerned at Soviet movements and build-up, but these concerns were also dismissed.

To an extent the Soviets had contributed to this by a series of poorly prepared counterattacks made to the north of the city during October that had been easily repulsed, giving Sixth Army a false sense of security. Indeed, Hitler himself scoffed at the possibility of the Red Army carrying out anything approaching a major operation, as he regarded it as a spent force awaiting the coup de grace shortly to be delivered. However, Sixth Army's intelligence staff did warn Paulus of a Soviet build-up, but their concerns were felt to be overly pessimistic and were discounted. It was a classic case of underestimating the enemy.

Third Romanian Army declared that a Soviet attack was due on 7-8 November, 25 years after the Bolshevik Revolution. Although nothing happened, Luftwaffe reconnaissance flights backed up the Romanians' concerns – the Soviets were increasing their forces to the north of the city. Hitler agreed to reinforce the Romanians with XXXXVIII Panzer Corps's 14th and 22nd Panzer divisions and First Romanian Armoured Division. But these units were understrength and lacked both modern tanks and fuel. Nevertheless, it looked like a powerful force – at least at Hitler's HQ if not out on the steppe. When General Hermann

SIXTH ARMY POWs

PRISONERS FACED A BLEAK FUTURE AS THEY WERE HERDED TOGETHER

It had taken the Soviets some time to realise the numbers trapped in the Stalingrad pocket. Consequently there was a degree of confusion over the numbers actually captured. There is no doubt that many Axis troops were summarily executed during the fighting as a reaction to the conditions many Soviet troops had seen their own men kept in as POWs. Furthermore, of the large number of Hiwis, many attempted to melt into the chaos. A figure that is generally accepted for Axis POWs is 91,000.

As Paulus underwent interrogation and had his staff car confiscated, his hungry, exhausted and sick men stumbled across the river they had bled to reach. Thousands died of malnutrition, frostbite and mercy shots as they were herded eastwards to camps that they were often expected to build for themselves. As their former commanders bickered and took positions that either damned or supported their government, their men continued to die.

POWs crossing the frozen waters of the Volga



The POWs were divided by nationality, and the non-Germans were treated marginally better and placed in positions of power over their former allies. Inevitably there was dissent. Of the 45,000 who survived into the spring and summer, work was the only way to ensure some hope of a return home. Those with building skills were set to rebuild towns and cities ruined by the war or for party apparatchiks in Moscow, where their work was highly valued. In 1955 only 5,000 Stalingrad veterans returned to Germany.

“IN 1955, ONLY 5,000 STALINGRAD VETERANS RETURNED TO GERMANY”

The legacy of Stalingrad: Axis corpses await burial on the outskirts of the city



STALINGRAD

In the city patrolling continued. A nicely posed shot of Germans moving cautiously through the Red October steel works provided the media at home with optimistic propaganda for civilian consumption

Below: The dispersal of German armoured formations and the use of Panzer crews as infantrymen in Stalingrad contributed to the slow response to Soviet breakthroughs. Fuel and ammunition were to be collected from depots in the rear, which were often either captured or destroyed by their fleeing defenders

Below: Men and officers celebrate the link-up of Stalingrad and Southwestern Fronts at Sovietsky Farm 15 kilometres (nine miles) closer to Stalingrad on 23 November

Below: Other bridges, such as that at Vertyachy, were still in German hands, and it was for these that the Axis forces west of Stalingrad headed. However, a shortage of horses meant that a lot of equipment had to be abandoned



Hoth, commanding Fourth Panzer Army – which included XXXXVIII Panzer Corps and VI Romanian Corps – voiced his concerns about the Soviet concentrations developing opposite VI Corps, he too was ignored. Hoth's five Romanian infantry divisions covered the line south from Stalingrad to Romanian Fourth Army's position. Again, to soothe his ally's nerves, Hitler sanctioned the issue of a small number of anti-tank guns and mines to Romanian Fourth Army.

Operation Uranus (North)

The build-up of Soviet forces for Operation Uranus took longer than anticipated, so Zhukov asked for a postponement of the attack and was granted ten days. On 18 November Chuikov was informed of the attack, and for his 62nd Army it came just in time, as the Volga was almost frozen to the point where it was too difficult for ships but too weak for foot soldiers or vehicles to cross.

As the ice floes ground downstream to their rear, Stalingrad's defenders had been split into three groups – two small pockets and the main one, which ran from the Red October steel works to the southern suburbs. When the frontoviki (front line men) heard the gunfire to the north during the morning of 19 November they did not believe the rumoured counteroffensive was underway. It was only when artillery fire was heard coming from the

south 24 hours later that they let themselves believe it was true.

The first victim of Operation Uranus was Third Romanian Army. At 8.50am Fifth Tank Army (Southwestern Front) struck at the junction of the Romanians' left flank, where it abutted the Italian Eighth Army. To the Soviet right, First Guards Army was positioned to prevent any Italian counterattacks. Four hours of desperate fighting resulted in a Soviet breakthrough with support from the Red Air Force as the morning mist rose. Alerted to the Soviet attack, Paulus's HQ was nevertheless unaware of its seriousness until later in the day. By then Soviet tanks of IV Tank Corps supported by III Guards Cavalry Corps were through IV Romanian Corps defences, supported to their right by Fifth Tank Army, which was reducing Romanian II Corps to a state of confusion. At Army Group B's HQ, Weichs ordered Paulus to halt operations in Stalingrad, "with the objective of moving forces

"FOUR HOURS OF DESPERATE FIGHTING RESULTED IN A SOVIET BREAKTHROUGH WITH SUPPORT FROM THE RED AIR FORCE AS THE MORNING MIST ROSE"

to cover the rear [left] flank of Sixth Army and secure lines of communication".

Convinced that Don Front's attack was the main threat, Weichs had ordered XXXXVIII Panzer Corps to drive to the Romanians' rescue. In effect Weichs was trying to assemble a mobile striking force to hold the Soviet armour, utilising virtually all of Sixth Army's Panzer and motorised divisions. However, 16th and 22nd Panzer Divisions were not ready to move, as their units were scattered and poorly supplied with ammunition and fuel. Consequently First Romanian Armoured Division's obsolete Skoda tanks were almost the only vehicles immediately available.

The Romanian armour ran into the T34s of XXVI Tank Corps and narrowly escaped complete destruction. Soviet armour and cavalry forces were under strict orders to avoid serious combat, their primary objective being to encircle Sixth Army, so they pushed ahead, leaving disorganised groups of Romanian defenders to be dealt with by the supporting infantry. The German infantry divisions north of Stalingrad were now forced to realign themselves westwards to cover their flanks and rear. German 376th Infantry Division was closest to the Romanians and began to bend to its left, as did the German 44th Infantry Division but, due to fuel shortages, this was a problematic manoeuvre and equipment had to be abandoned. During the next 24 hours

A Soviet 76mm infantry support gun prepares to fire. Pockets of resistance were left to be mopped up by follow-up units. Food and other supplies were sacrificed for fuel and ammunition



“THE ROMANIAN ARMOUR RAN INTO THE T34S OF XXVI TANK CORPS AND NARROWLY ESCAPED COMPLETE DESTRUCTION”

these formations and 384th Infantry Division pulled back to the southwest and the Don. South of these units, 14th Panzer Division was attempting to determine the direction of the Soviet thrust while 22nd Panzer Division was falling back in the face of I Tank Corps.

To further complicate Army Group B's difficulties was the fronts their flanking divisions were trying to hold. In the case of Romanian Third Army this was 20-24 kilometres (12-15 miles). To the south, Romanian Fourth Army's right flank was patrolled by Eighth Cavalry Division, which was attempting to monitor a 150-kilometre (93-mile) line.

Operation Uranus (South)

Sixth Army HQ was situated 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of Kalach – the proposed Soviet junction point – at Golubinsky, unaware that Soviet tanks were within 30 kilometres (19 miles) of their position. During the course of 21 November it was decided to relocate to the rail junction of Gumrak, just west of Stalingrad, where there was also an airfield. However, during this movement a message came through ordering Sixth Army to “stand firm in spite of danger of temporary encirclement”, but was overlooked. Paulus's staff were not fully aware of the threat moving towards them from the southern pincer.

Stalingrad Front, under Colonel General A. I. Yermenko, preceded its attack with a

THE AIRLIFT

THE EFFORTS TO CREATE HITLER'S PROMISED SKY BRIDGE FELL SHORT

Supplying the men and machines in the Stalingrad pocket by air began on 23 November. JU-52 transport planes flew into Pitomnik airfield (roughly 20 kilometres or 12 miles from central Stalingrad) mainly from Tatsinskaya 260 kilometres (160 miles) to the west. For a JU-52 the flight time was 75 minutes one way, but over three hours was required for unloading, refuelling and waiting time.

Despite the objections of local Luftwaffe commanders Goering would not explain to Hitler that the air bridge was unable to deliver the necessary tonnage of supplies. It was estimated that 300 tons per day would keep the garrison functioning, whereas 750 tons would enable it to perform at an operational capacity. This latter figure was revised down to 500 tons in light of experience. The reality was somewhat different. Even when He-III and FW-200 bombers were pressed into service to supplement the JU-52s the delivery of 300 tons was achieved only once.

Tatsinskaya was overrun by Soviet armour on 24 December. It was recaptured four days later. Flights were switched to airfields further west, extending the flight time. Up to 45,000 wounded were evacuated by air. Pitomnik fell on 17 January, and Gumrak became the main airstrip for six days, until it too was captured. The remaining airfield couldn't deal with transport planes. Supplies were parachuted in but most were lost in snow as the Luftwaffe refused to dye the white parachutes.



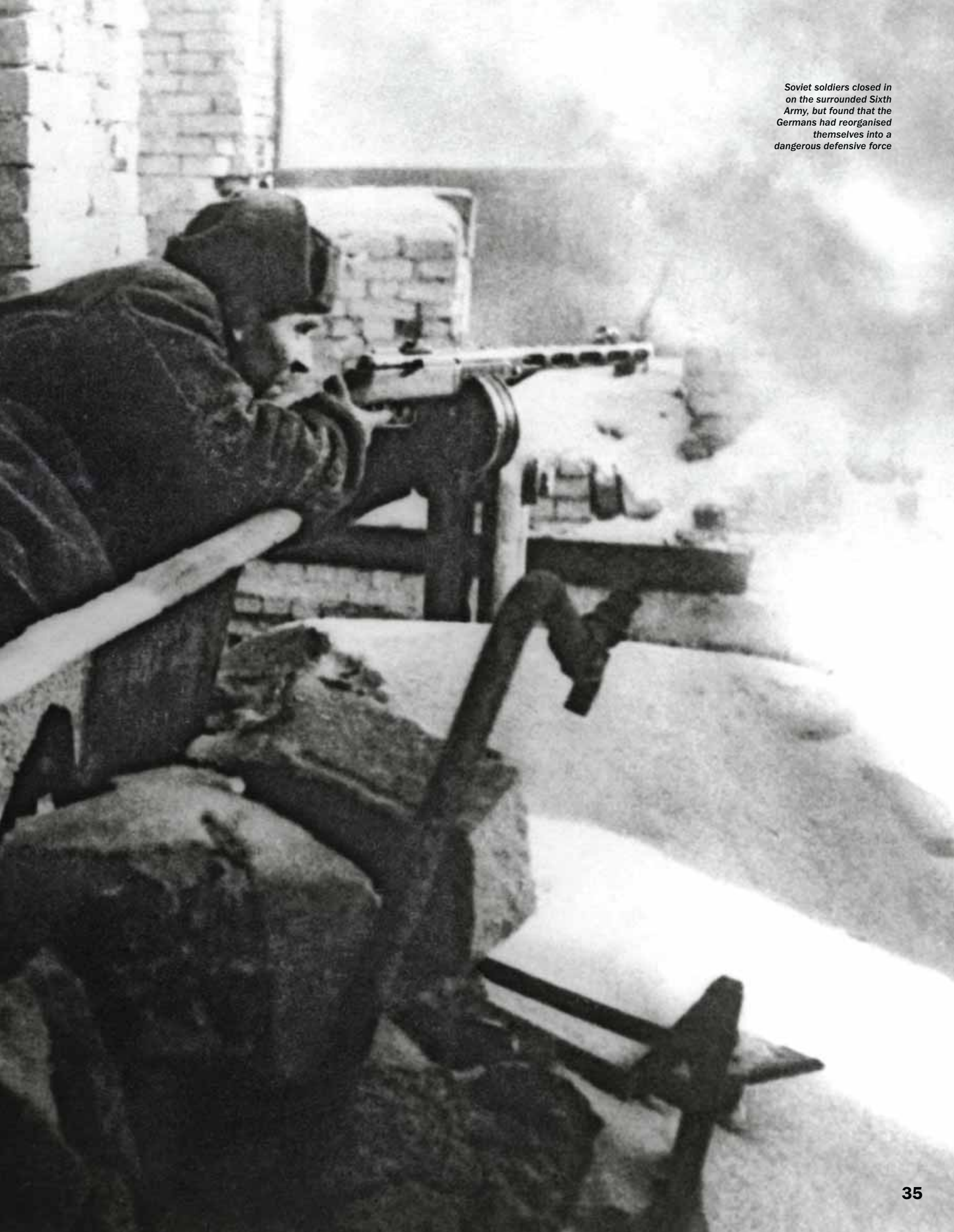
Above: A wrecked JU-52 at Tatsinskaya. Surprised by the attack, many aircraft took off but 72 (Luftwaffe figures) were destroyed on the ground. The Soviets claimed 300 destroyed including “a trainload of disassembled aircraft”. Whichever figure is correct, it was a heavy blow to the airlift



Above: The Soviets placed battery after battery of anti-aircraft guns on the flight paths to Stalingrad. These took a heavy toll of the lumbering, fully laden aircraft both arriving and departing

“ON 18 NOVEMBER CHUIKOV WAS INFORMED OF THE ATTACK, AND FOR HIS 62ND ARMY IT CAME JUST IN TIME AS THE VOLGA WAS ALMOST FROZEN TO THE POINT WHERE IT WAS TOO DIFFICULT FOR SHIPS BUT TOO WEAK FOR FOOT SOLDIERS OR VEHICLES TO CROSS”

*Soviet soldiers closed in
on the surrounded Sixth
Army, but found that the
Germans had reorganised
themselves into a
dangerous defensive force*



"PRIORITY WAS GIVEN TO GERMANS, AND MANY ROMANIANS WERE PUSHED ASIDE WITH THE BUTT OF A FELDGENDARME'S MACHINE PISTOL"

Soviet scouts, razvedchiki, check a building for enemy troops. The scouts were an elite among the infantry, provided with better clothes and weapons. Many Soviet infantrymen at this time lacked winter camouflage suits

45-minute bombardment on 20 November. As the gunfire died away the infantry rushed forward at 10.45am, supported by tanks of XIII Mechanised Corps. Soviet reports of the breakthrough suggested a mix of stolid Romanian defence and abject surrender, while nearby German observers noted that “masses of Soviet tanks... in quantities never seen before” were pouring across the snow into Fourth Romanian Army’s positions.

The Soviet breakthrough came speedily: after only two hours Romanian VI Corps was approaching near collapse. The timely intervention of German 29th Motorised Infantry Division stabilised the situation briefly, but it was ordered to withdraw in order to protect Sixth Army’s southern flank, leaving the battered Romanians to their own devices. By this point, virtually no organised defence lay between Stalingrad Front’s armour and Kalach: only the problem of refuelling the Soviet T34s could slow their rapid progress.

The bridge at Kalach crossed the Don River roughly 75 kilometres (47 miles) from Stalingrad, but its garrison only discovered they were under threat on 21 November and remained unaware that XIII Mechanised Corps was within 50 kilometres (30 miles) of their position. The units in and around Kalach consisted of some Luftwaffe anti-aircraft guns, a variety of supply and support troops plus some field police and labourers of the Organisation Todt. Most of the flak pieces were positioned on the higher western bank

overlooking the bridge and the village of Kalach on the eastern bank, where an ad hoc battlegroup was forming.

The Soviet XXVI Tank Corps approaching from the northwest was in a hurry to close the trap and allocated several captured German vehicles to an armoured group that, after three hours of confused fighting, captured the bridge intact and liberated the village. Although the Soviets claimed 1,500 POWs, other accounts noted that German troops managed to drive away and head for Stalingrad, having destroyed supply and repair facilities. The following day troops of the southern pincer, IV Mechanised Corps, arrived at Kalach. Stalingrad was, at least tenuously, surrounded.

As the Germans approached the Don bridges, queues began forming to make the crossing. Priority was given to Germans, and many Romanians were pushed aside with the butt of a feldgendarme’s machine pistol. Rumours of Soviet attacks only fuelled the increasing sense of confusion that was slipping inexorably towards chaos. Once across the river there seems to have been little sense of anything but a pervasive desire to reach the haven they believed Stalingrad to be. The question on every man’s lips was summed up in one diary entry: “Will we get through to the big pocket?”

Elsewhere other pockets of resistance, such as that of the Romanians commanded by General Mihail Lascar from the remains of V Army Corps, were crumbling under Soviet pressure. Stalingrad, the ‘big pocket’, seemed

to offer security, order and the chance to survive, whereas the snow-blown steppe was a frozen, featureless wasteland where Soviet cavalry roamed at will scooping up stragglers. The men of the German army in the east, almost to a man, believed the Red Army rarely bothered to keep POWs alive. By 26 November the only organised groups of German troops left on the west bank of the Don were 16th Panzer Division and elements of 44th Infantry division. They crossed the Luchinsky bridge that evening, blowing it after the last man had crossed.

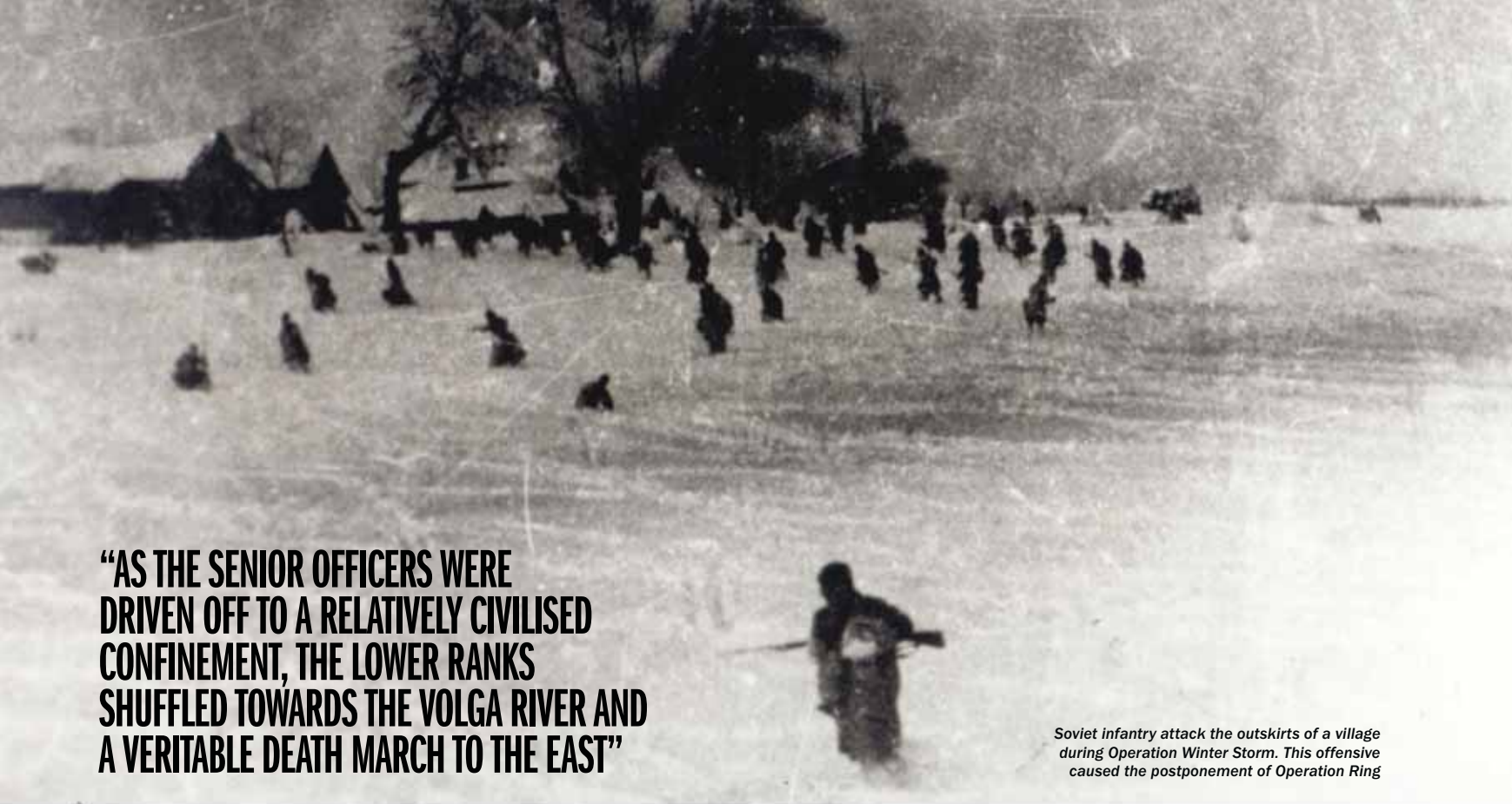
The Soviets now began to develop their inner and outer rings of enclosure as Paulus and his staff struggled to bring some sort of order to Sixth Army. On 23 November, in what Hitler called ‘Fortress Stalingrad’, Paulus was to carry out his order to “adopt hedgehog [all-round] defence, present Volga line and northern front to be held at all costs [as] supplies coming by air”. Furthermore the Fuhrer created a new command, Army Group Don, under the command of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, on 20 November to restore the situation in southern Russia, despite his other concerns, such as the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa and the occupation of Vichy France.

Within the fluid 200-kilometre (124-mile) perimeter that enclosed Fortress Stalingrad were some 22 divisions, numbering roughly 240,000 men – including much of Romanian 20th Infantry Division, a group of Italians looking for building materials and the entire Croatian 369th Reinforced Infantry Regiment fighting in the factory district. There were also up to 50,000 Russian volunteers working for or fighting alongside the Germans. Known as Hiwis (short for Hilfswilliger or voluntary assistant) they were often POWs collaborating to avoid a dire fate or anti-Soviet groups such as the local Kalmyks and Don Cossacks. These men and women would be a particular target for the NKVD, who were tasked with rooting out all collaborators. Surrounding them as the inner cordon were seven Soviet armies that included both the Don and Stalingrad Fronts, along with 21st Army from Southwestern Front and 62nd Army in the city itself.

As the Soviets advanced into the city they were amazed at how many civilians emerged from hiding to greet them. These people were not so lucky. It is likely they were killed by the Germans for their warm clothing

Assault guns move up to their start lines for Operation Winter Storm, which began on 12 December

“STALINGRAD, THE ‘BIG POCKET’, SEEMED TO OFFER SECURITY, ORDER AND THE CHANCE TO SURVIVE”



“AS THE SENIOR OFFICERS WERE DRIVEN OFF TO A RELATIVELY CIVILISED CONFINEMENT, THE LOWER RANKS SHUFFLED TOWARDS THE VOLGA RIVER AND A VERITABLE DEATH MARCH TO THE EAST”

Soviet infantry attack the outskirts of a village during Operation Winter Storm. This offensive caused the postponement of Operation Ring

The external cordon followed the Chir, Don and Aksay rivers for 322 kilometres (200 miles). Fourth Panzer Army had managed to hold onto a bridgehead across the Chir at Kotelnikovo to the southwest while 16th Motorised Infantry Division covered the empty, inhospitable Kalmyk Steppe between Army Group Don and Army Group A far away to the south in the Caucasus. This latter formation was now in grave danger of isolation – very little covered its lines of communications to the west through Rostov, and it was naked before the Red Army. The obvious question now was what should Sixth Army do? Should it attempt to break out, or stand firm and trust Hitler's promise of an air bridge?

Operation Winter Storm

As the Red Army organised itself around the city, established supply lines and caught its breath, Manstein frantically prepared what was proclaimed to be a relief mission for Sixth Army. However, the matter of a breakout provoked controversy from the moment of encirclement. Manstein was allocated three infantry divisions and three Panzer divisions, only one of which was immediately available. Hitler was only prepared to sanction a thrust to Stalingrad that would enable its resupply and ensure that the city would not fall, but reserved the right to allow a breakout. However, Manstein lacked the resources to accomplish this and re-establish the front to cover Army Group A in the Caucasus. Nor had the Soviets called a halt to their offensive as the continuation of Operation Uranus, Operation Saturn, was timed to start on 10 December.

Saturn was a far more ambitious envelopment offensive that was to break the Italian Eighth Army, which was positioned to the left of Romanian Fourth Army's former position north of Stalingrad, and then push on to Rostov, thus isolating Army Group A. In preparation

for the operation, Vasilevsky instructed Don and Stalingrad Fronts to squeeze Sixth Army's perimeter and link up at Gumrak. Fighting began during the first week of December but rapidly ground to a halt in the face of a fierce, well-organised defence, which demonstrated that Moscow had underestimated the power and size of Sixth Army. The Soviets were convinced they had trapped a mere 100,000 men with little combat capability. Consequently, Stalin ordered Rokossovsky to draw up a plan for a more considered offensive against the Stalingrad pocket, which was code-named Operation Ring.

As Manstein's forces gathered at Kotelnikovo bridgehead, Vasilevsky attempted a spoiling attack, which failed but obliged Manstein to alter his line of attack. Now it would take a longer route across terrain that involved crossing the Aksay and Myshkova rivers. The attack caused the Soviet forces of the inner perimeter to concentrate on preventing any breakout. It also led to Operation 'Little' Saturn that would defeat Manstein's thrust.

Operation Saturn proper was reduced and was now intended to simply break into the rear of Army Group Don via the Italian position. Its start date was to be 16 December. As Manstein's armour reached the Myshkova – the second river it faced – Soviet Sixth and First Guards Armies tore into the Italian positions, which caved in after 48 hours of hard fighting. Simultaneously XXXVIII Panzer Corps's line west of the Don along the Chir River began to crumble. To crown everything, Stalingrad Front counterattacked along the Myshkova River, pushing Army Group Don's armour back to its start line over the course of the next three days. On 28 December a much shaken Hitler agreed to pull Army Group A out of the Caucasus and ordered Manstein to establish a defence line 240 kilometres (150 miles) west of Stalingrad.

Paulus and Sixth Army were on their own. With the Volga frozen, Chuikov's 62nd Army

was supplied with relative ease as their enemy slaughtered horses and stared at the skies for the very few aircraft and parachutes that appeared. Christmas celebrations were muted as the morale of Sixth Army gradually eroded, worn down by lack of food and little hope of relief. The Soviets husbanded their resources in preparation for Operation Ring.

Operation Ring

The start date for Ring was 6 January but was delayed by four days. The whole operation was to be carried out by Don Front with holding attacks to be mounted by 62nd and 64th armies. The pocket was to be sliced up with an initial attack to cut off the 'nose' that poked westwards from the city.

The attack began at 9am. 62nd Army's assault groups took the Mamayev Kurgan and the Red October factory, while out on the steppe three Soviet armies hammered the perimeter lines, destroying 44th and 376th infantry and 29th Motorised Divisions, whose troops scattered towards the built up areas to the east. Pausing briefly to regroup, the next phase of Rokossovsky's attack reduced Sixth Army by a further five divisions and forced Paulus to move his HQ into the cellars of the Univermag department store in the city centre.

When on 26 January men of Don Front met up with troops of Chuikov's command, the pocket was split into two, north and south. Five days later Paulus was promoted to Field Marshall to stiffen his will to fight on, but to no avail. At 7.45am on 31 January the southern pocket and Paulus announced their intention to surrender. The northern pocket continued to fight on under the leadership of Major General Karl Strecker, who surrendered on 2 February.

As the senior officers were driven off to a relatively civilised confinement, the lower ranks shuffled towards the Volga River and a veritable death march to the east.

Images: Alamy, CMAF, Stravka

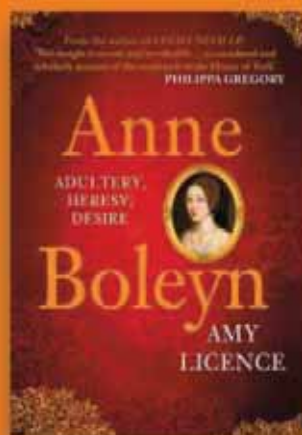
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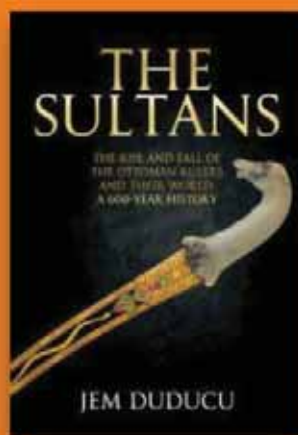
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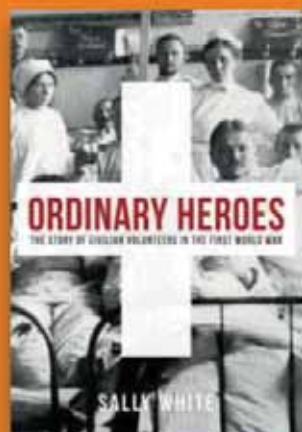
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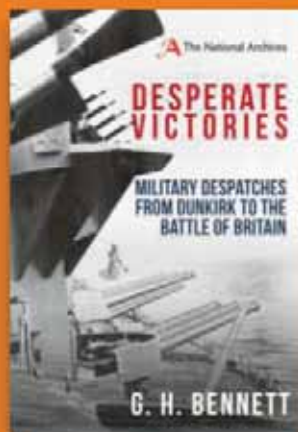
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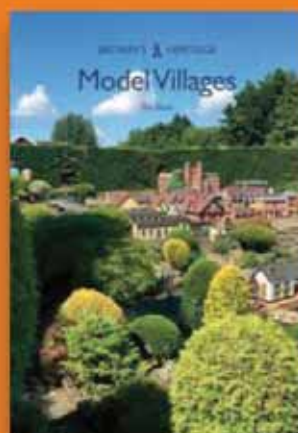
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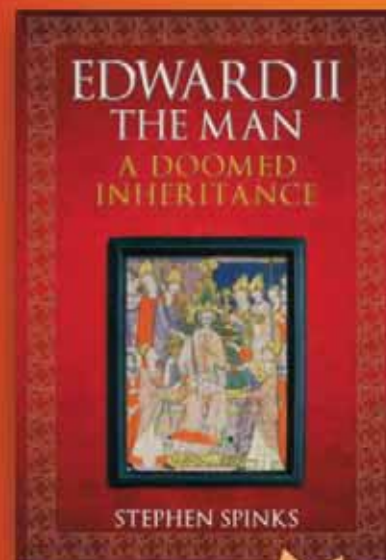
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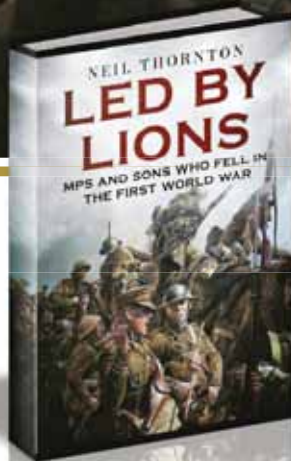


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WORDS TOM GARNER



PARLIAMENT'S SACRIFICE

This new book commemorates those members of parliament and their sons who fell during WWI, and challenges the 'lions led by donkeys' myth

T rue to their credentials as leaders, the vast majority of MPs served in the armed forces as officers and proportionately suffered heavy casualties. 22 sitting parliamentarians died between 1914-18, but the loss of their sons overwhelmingly outweighed their own sacrifices, with almost 90 being killed by the end of the war.

Written by military historian Neil Thornton, *Led By Lions* dispels the popular belief that Britain's politicians sat in safety while they heartlessly sent the nation's youths to their deaths. The prime minister, chancellor of the exchequer and Speaker of the House of Commons all lost sons, and many MPs who died were noted for their extreme bravery, such as Thomas Agar-Robartes, who was

recommended for the Victoria Cross. Such gallantry is at odds with the popular perception of ordinary British soldiers being 'lions led by donkeys' and Thornton's book is a timely revisionist take on the price of leadership during the Great War.

To pay tribute to the fallen MPs and sons of WWI and to celebrate the publication of *Led by Lions*, Fonthill Media held a reception at the

INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR



NEIL THORNTON DISCUSSES *LED BY LIONS*, THE IMPACT OF WWI ON THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND ITS LEGACY TODAY FOR SITTING MPS

What was the idea behind the book?

The original idea came to me about two years ago. I got invited to Downing Street by my then-MP because I'd done some local project work. The MP who invited me knows a lot about history, and I'd seen something he'd posted on social media about the 100th anniversary of when an MP was killed during the war. I'm obviously interested in military history so I Googled this man, and the story that came up was fascinating.

I read up on more MPs that were killed – mainly through military forums – and they all said the same things like, "Politicians pointed at a map and sent their men there who were subsequently killed. They didn't care and all sat back in the safety of home." But the more I looked at it, there were MPs who had sons who were all serving. I would read comments that would say that the MPs suffered no loss and wouldn't risk anything themselves.

The idea started there really, so I hired a researcher and said, "I want every service file of all the MPs." After reading the files I phoned the publisher to say, "I've got this idea and the reason I'm doing it is to change the public perception." They loved it and said, "Yes, we'll go for it."

What is the meaning behind the title of *Led by Lions*?

The phrase "lions led by donkeys" refers to more high-ranking officers such as generals. By the centenary in 2014 I found that, while it was great that more people were getting involved and interested in WWI, they hadn't properly studied it and still had the old ingrained myths – with 'lions led by donkeys' being the main one. It keeps popping up now more than ever because of the centenary, and the perception is spreading to lower ranking officers and politicians of the war too. I don't agree with that at all so I'm hoping to stem the perception from spreading. I thought the title would be a punchy way to hit the spark of interest that this wasn't the case.

How devastating was the impact of WWI on the House of Commons?

It was massive. In proportion to the non-political ordinary soldiers, a lot of the MPs and their

families were already serving in 1914, particularly in territorial units, and they all went straight over there. The MPs were exempt from active service because of their role, but they went over anyway. Also, with the exception of one or two, every MP or son was an officer and they proportionally suffered higher casualty rates. The consequent effect was pretty much devastating. The prime minister, chancellor of the exchequer and Speaker of the House all lost at least one son, but the MPs or family members are not recognised today.

Is there any biography that stands out for you in your book, and for what reason?

Thomas Agar-Robartes. He was a territorial cavalry officer and he pulled strings because he wanted to go on active service in the Coldstream Guards. When he arrived the other officers had been there for years and worked their way through, while he had just 'turned up' as an MP. They just thought, "Who's this fellow?" but he proved them wrong and they all eventually said that he was one of the bravest officers in the Guards during the entire war. He was ultimately recommended for the VC so he was a standout for me.

What impact would the deaths of sons on active service have on sitting MPs during the war?

Some of the MPs actually broke down publicly during a speech or at an event. A lot of them were rallying for recruitment, but they broke down because they'd lost their sons a week or two before and they were trying to carry on and do their duty. One serving MP's son was killed and he was also a soldier himself. He was once rallying for recruits at half time during a football match. He stood in the middle of the pitch and said, "I don't say 'go'. I say 'Come with me'. I've been over there and I've lost my son, but if I had nine sons I'd give nine."

How important is the story of *Led by Lions* in relation to today's politics?

When we hear and read about past heroes from the world wars people say, "They don't make them like that anymore." But I honestly think that if this happened again (although wars are run differently now) it would be the same. MPs would come together and get involved. In terms of MPs' attitudes today it's just that they haven't got the opportunity to show what they would do, and I think that they would do the same now. People might not necessarily believe that but I do.



Houses of Parliament on 19 December 2017. Sitting members of the House of Commons and family representatives of the fallen MPs and sons were invited to the book launch in the State Rooms of Speaker's House. Speeches were given by Neil Thornton, Colonel Bob Stewart MP and Ian Paisley Jr. MP, who also wrote the preface to the book. Thornton, MPs and family representatives gave their thoughts on *Led by Lions* and the sacrifices made by the nation's representatives 100 years ago.

Below: The Parliamentary War Memorial was unveiled in Westminster Hall in 1922 to commemorate the members of both Houses of Parliament and their sons who lost their lives in World War I



22 sitting MPs of the British House of Commons were killed between 1914-18



— REFLECTIONS FROM SITTING MPS —

CURRENT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT GIVE THEIR THOUGHTS ON THEIR WORLD WAR I PREDECESSORS, SOME OF WHOM ACTUALLY SERVED IN THE SAME SEATS



JIM FITZPATRICK MP

CONSTITUENCY: POPLAR AND LIMEHOUSE

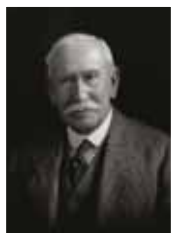
PARTY: LABOUR

WWI PREDECESSOR: SIR WILLIAM PEARCE (LIBERAL)

Can you imagine MPs volunteering for military service today in circumstances similar to WWI?

I wouldn't have thought they would join up in the same numbers but clearly there are MPs who have been members of the armed forces. There are still MPs who are reservists and a number have been out to Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. I would not be at all surprised if there were MPs who would fulfil that expectation. I spent 23 years in the Fire Brigade

and am 65 now, but I am sure there are younger members who, if necessary, would want to contribute and 'do their bit'.



Inset, above: Sir William Pearce's only son Geoffrey was killed while serving as a second lieutenant in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment at Fleurbaix on 18 December 1914

What can the example of leadership provided by the fallen MPs of WWI teach sitting members of the Commons?

The WWI MPs are remembered in the Order Paper on the day that they fell and that has also been happening for more recent conflicts, which makes people reflect, remember and pay tribute. The Speaker makes an announcement each day when the business starts to draw attention to the Order Paper.

Whenever there are Remembrance services pretty much all MPs attend to pay tribute to those who gave their lives for that which we all take for granted more or less in terms of our freedoms and democracy. The Merchant Navy Memorial in my constituency is for those who fell in both world wars. The youngest people who are remembered on that were 14 while the oldest was 79. It's important that we do play our part in remembering and therefore it's very much part of the job.



LIZ MCINNES MP

CONSTITUENCY: HEYWOOD AND MIDDLETON

PARTY: LABOUR

WWI PREDECESSOR: HAROLD CAWLEY (LIBERAL)

What are your thoughts on Harold Cawley's service, not just as an MP but also a serving soldier?

I can't imagine what it must have been like, particularly the idea that you would serve as an MP and also do active service. Obviously it was very male-dominated back then and the pressure was on young men to fight. I think MPs at the time wanted to lead by example and felt it was their duty to serve on the front line.

grateful for the sacrifices that were made and accept it was a different time and outlook.

We do have current MPs who are members of the army and, although I hope the situation wouldn't arise, I am sure they would ask themselves where their responsibilities lie. Do they lie with their constituents or their country? It's a great example for all of us that MPs were willing to put their lives on the line for the country.

What can the example of leadership provided by the fallen MPs of WWI teach sitting members of the Commons?

As an MP you obviously have to show leadership. I personally would be quite reluctant to show the sort of leadership that was shown by our predecessors, but I think they were different times. There was so much pressure put on young men to fight during WWI, and I think we're more sophisticated now in the way we talk about war. However, I do think we have to be

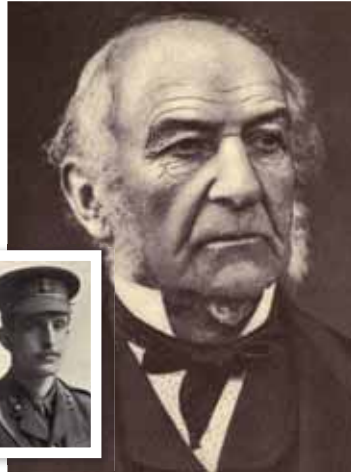


Harold Cawley served as a captain in the Manchester Regiment and was killed during the Gallipoli Campaign on 22 September 1915

"WHENEVER THERE ARE REMEMBRANCE SERVICES PRETTY MUCH ALL MPS ATTEND TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THAT WHICH WE ALL TAKE FOR GRANTED"



H.H. Asquith was the prime minister who declared war on Germany in August 1914 and served as premier until December 1916. His eldest son Raymond was killed in action on 15 September 1916



William G.C. Gladstone MP was the grandson of the Liberal prime minister. He wanted to enlist as a private but was advised to become an officer. He was killed near Laventie, France on 13 April 1915



COLONEL BOB STEWART MP

CONSTITUENCY: BECKENHAM
PARTY: CONSERVATIVE

What are your initial thoughts on the book?

I think the book is superb in that it primarily debunks the myth that young officers up to the rank of Lieutenant colonel were 'donkeys'. They weren't, they were just as much 'lions' as the men and more so in many ways because they died quicker and in just as much agony.

As a military veteran yourself, does the story have some resonance for you?

The resonance it has for me is the love that soldiers have in combat with all that serve with them, it is paramount and it never goes away. That's why you see so many old comrades associations – not one of them would betray any man who had been in combat with him.

What can the example of leadership provided by the fallen MPs of WWI teach sitting members of the Commons?

Put your country first. MPs are expected to obey three cardinal rules to the state, constituents

and their party, in that order. Too many seem to think these days in self-interest so I would say, "Put your country first" and that's why I am an MP.

Below: Colonel Bob Stewart MP gives a speech to guests next to Ian Paisley Jr. MP



"I WOULD SAY, 'PUT YOUR COUNTRY FIRST' AND THAT'S WHY I AM AN MP"



IAN PAISLEY JR. MP

CONSTITUENCY: NORTH ANTRIM
PARTY: DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST

What are your initial thoughts on the book?

I think it's fantastic because it's filled this particular void, especially for schoolchildren. Many of them learn that WWI was a disaster and could have ended a lot sooner were it not for bad leadership. But then you actually put yourself in the shoes of the people who were in those leadership roles, such as MPs, and you realise that they actually played a very active role. They made a commitment, gave their service and 22 of them gave their lives, along with almost 100 of their children.

That turns this notion on its head and provokes a review of the history. A historian constantly has to review the evidence and change views, and I think Neil Thornton has very bravely tried to do that.

Were there any biographies that stand out in the book, and for what reason?

The story of Arthur O'Neill was very poignant to me and the Sheehan family was fascinating. I loved the Irish stories because whenever you look at what happened post-war in Ireland their stories become more poignant and significant.

However, the story that touched me the most was that of Andrew Bonar Law's sons. Bonar Law was trying to do his service and run the economy while at the same

time losing two sons in quick succession. That story would shed a tear from a stone just knowing what he had been through.

As a Unionist MP, what were your thoughts on the Irish Unionist and Nationalist MPs who fought side by side?

The most magnificent thing regarding the bravery of the men is that they put party political differences to one side. Even though they had constitutional differences they put 'king and country' first. There is a plaque in the House of Commons to the Unionist Arthur O'Neill and also to Willie Redmond, who was one of the leaders of Irish nationalism at the time. I think that tells its own story that they could argue politically but could also fight and defend together.

What can the example of leadership provided by the fallen MPs of WWI teach sitting members of the Commons?

As someone who has sons myself the thing that speaks to me is that the decisions you take affects people's lives. It can also affect your life and the life of your children so you have to make the right decision. That was the thing that struck me the most.

Left: Captain Arthur O'Neill was the first MP to die during WWI when he was killed at Klein Zillebeke on 6 November 1914, while he was serving in the Life Guards



Right: Major Willie Redmond was an Irish nationalist MP who was the brother of John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Aged 56, Redmond became the oldest MP to be killed during the war



THE FAMILIES OF THE FALLEN

THE DESCENDENTS & RELATIVES OF WWI MPS PERCY CLIVE AND D.D. SHEEHAN GIVE THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR ANCESTORS' SACRIFICES

DAN SHEEHAN & NOREEN STEWART

**GRANDSON AND GREAT-NIECE
OF D. D. SHEEHAN MP**

D.D. Sheehan was the MP for Mid Cork and a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the All-for-Ireland League. During WWI he served as a captain in the Royal Munster Fusiliers. Although he survived the war his two sons Daniel and Martin, as well his brother-in-law, were killed. Two more children, Michael (an officer) and Eileen (a VAD nurse and ambulance driver) were severely wounded on active service but survived.

What was the impact of WWI on your family?

NS: As well as having the two boys that died and Michael who was injured, the brothers also had a sister who was an ambulance driver and was wounded. Also, my grandfather Robert O'Connor, who was D.D. Sheehan's brother-in-law, was killed on the first day of Passchendaele so a lot of the family were involved in WWI.

How did the losses resonate in the family in the subsequent years?

DS: It was talked about because we all knew about it, but there were nine members of that family and there was a hell of a lot of fighting going on so it was almost 'par for the course'.

My grandfather was the MP and he was in the 'All Ireland' (Home Rule) group. He was



also the initial person who instigated the Royal Munsters in southern Ireland to raise an army because at that time southern Ireland was a bit on the German side as well. When he came back from the war Sinn Fein had been working against him. His house was set on fire and he had to spend three years over in Britain. His sons were allowed to remain in school but they had to go back to England during the holidays. I knew my grandfather and he used to stay at our house, but he wouldn't really talk about the war.

**"IT WAS A HORRIFIC WAR AND
YOU CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT
WAS LIKE IN THE TRENCHES"**

NS: When the Black and Tans came to Ireland [during the Irish War of Independence] they were going round burning houses. They came to our family house and were about to burn it but somebody said that my grandmother was the widow of somebody who was killed in WWI. She brought out her widow's pension book to show them and so they spared the house, but unfortunately they went up the road and burned down someone else's house instead.

How important is it that stories like the Sheehans' during WWI are remembered by today's generations?

DS: Today's generations have to realise what that generation gave up to give them the life they have had. It was a horrific war and you can't imagine what it was like in the trenches. That's the important thing, we don't seem to have so much respect for the army now and we've had a much easier life.

NS: I've always been interested in it and I was in Passchendaele for the 100th anniversary. I try to pass on the story to the next generation by telling them and nowadays with social media you can post photographs and bring them up to date with the story. One of my nephews is particularly interested, and I hope he'll be the one to pass it on. For me, it's even more important today than ever to work towards world peace, particularly with the threat of nuclear war. It doesn't even bear thinking about what would happen if there were a Third World War.

The fighting at Passchendaele affected the lives of hundreds of thousands, including the families of serving MPs like D.D. Sheehan





Above: D.D. Sheehan MP lost two sons during WWI. Both Daniel and Martin Sheehan were killed in air combat

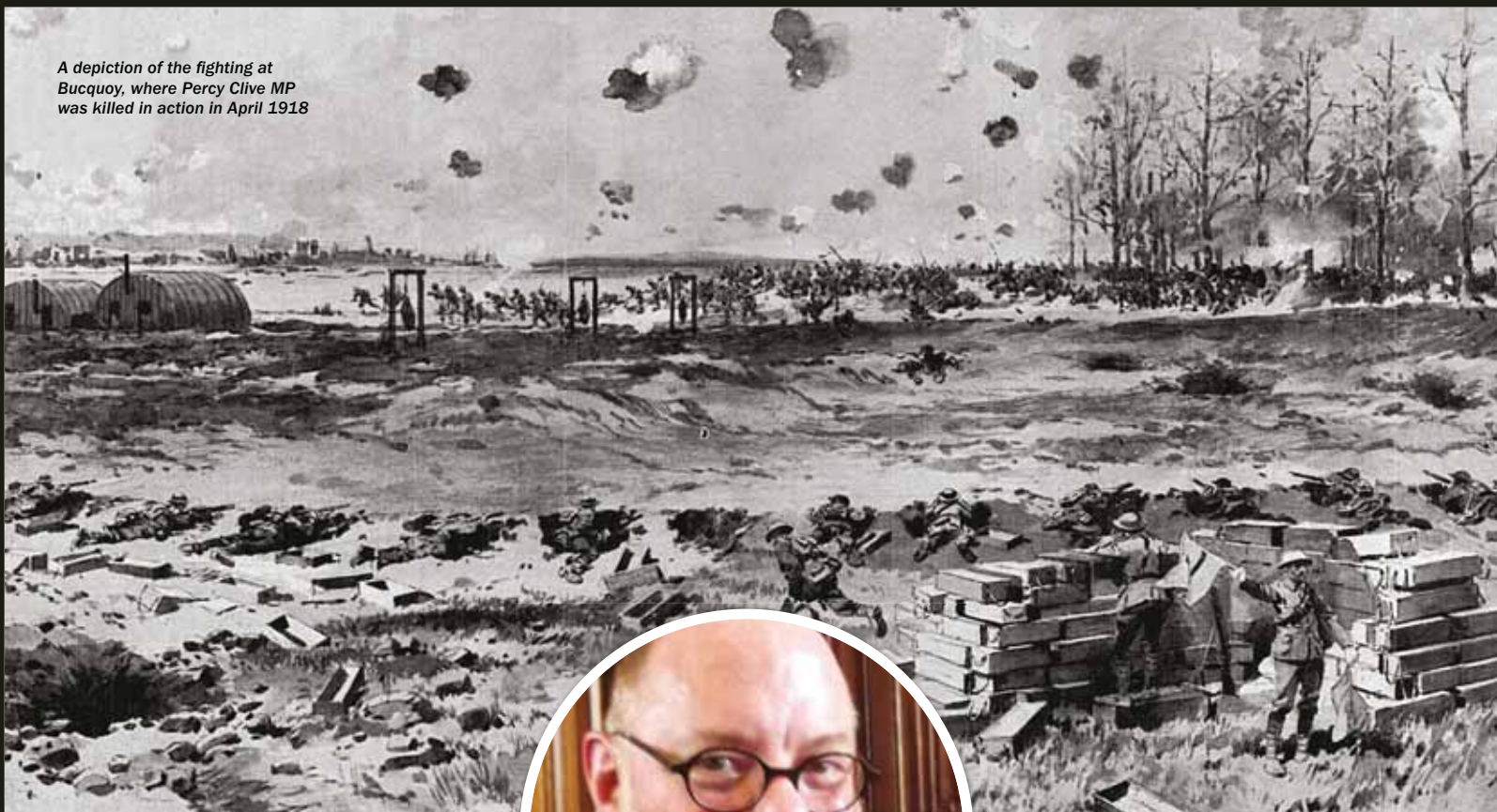
Second Lieutenant Daniel Sheehan was a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps and was killed on 10 May 1917. He was reportedly shot down by the German ace Lothar von Richthofen

**"TODAY'S GENERATIONS HAVE TO REALISE
WHAT THAT GENERATION GAVE UP TO GIVE
THEM THE LIFE THEY HAVE HAD"**

RAF pilot Second Lieutenant Martin Sheehan with his co-pilot Second Lieutenant William McCaig c.1918. Both men were killed when their aircraft was shot down on 1 October 1918



A depiction of the fighting at Bucquoy, where Percy Clive MP was killed in action in April 1918



MICHAEL HARGREAVE MAWSON

GREAT-GREAT-NEPHEW OF PERCY CLIVE MP

Percy Clive was the Liberal Unionist MP for Ross and had fought during the Boer War, where he was wounded. During WWI he rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Grenadier Guards, was twice mentioned in despatches and decorated several times. Clive was killed in action at Bucquoy on 5 April 1918. His great-great-nephew Michael Hargreave Mawson is a respected historian of the Crimean War.

What are your thoughts on *Led By Lions*?

I think it's a wonderful idea. The phrase "lions led by donkeys" actually dates back to the Crimean War. Outside the walls of Sevastopol a Russian sergeant said to his English counterpart, "Your men are like lions but your officers are donkeys," and practically every officer in the war wrote this down and sent it home in a letter. How true the phrase was in the Crimea is open to debate but clearly Neil [Thornton] has proven that in the First World War it was rubbish. The men were indeed 'lions'.

Contrary to belief, Percy Clive did not receive the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) but was awarded the Légion d'honneur and Croix de Guerre by the French



"EVERYBODY SEEMS TO THINK HE WAS AWARDED THE DSO, BUT HE WASN'T, AND NEIL THORNTON HAS TRACKED THIS DOWN AND PROVED IT"

What kind of soldier was Percy Clive?

Percy was killed in action in an extraordinary act of gallantry, which was only one of a series that he had performed during WWI. Practically everybody seems to think he was awarded the DSO [Distinguished Service Order], but he wasn't, and Neil Thornton has tracked this down and proved it. However, it goes to show the way he conducted himself and the scrapes he got into that people came to the conclusion that he must have had a DSO!

How important is that stories like Percy Clive's are remembered?

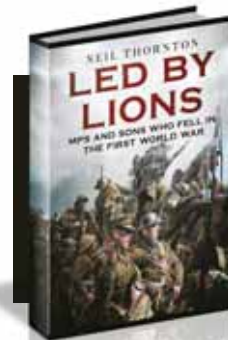
Percy had a son who went on to be killed in the Western Desert during the Second World War, which led to that side of the family dying out. Ultimately, these deaths led to the end of that entire family.

I think it's very important that everybody's story is remembered, particularly when we're

in the political state we're in now. We're inches away from leaving the European Union that has provided us with a peaceful continent for 70 years. I have been reading a lot of WWI military history books over the last couple of years in the context of the centenary anniversaries, but the thought of war is becoming conceivable again as we leave the EU. Our exit from the EU could mean that it breaks up and causes new national tensions to arise. It's a terrifying time now to look back at what a European war means. It's not actually ancient history and could be tomorrow's news.

What can the example of leadership provided by the fallen MPs and sons of WWI teach sitting members of the Commons?

The chances are that in the same circumstances today's House would react in the same way. I don't think there's an absence of leadership in our current MPs and I don't think they need to be taught how to stand up and be counted. But it is always well to look back and say, "These are your peers. These are the exemplars you should be following." However, I don't think we have any pusillanimous MPs or any cowards in the House; they stand up for what they believe in. Jo Cox didn't serve on a front line in a trench but she was out there and she died for what she felt was right.



Led by Lions. MPs and Sons Who Fell in the First World War by Neil Thornton is published by Fonthill Media. For a review turn to page 88.

Images: Mary Evans, Fonthill Media

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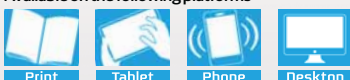


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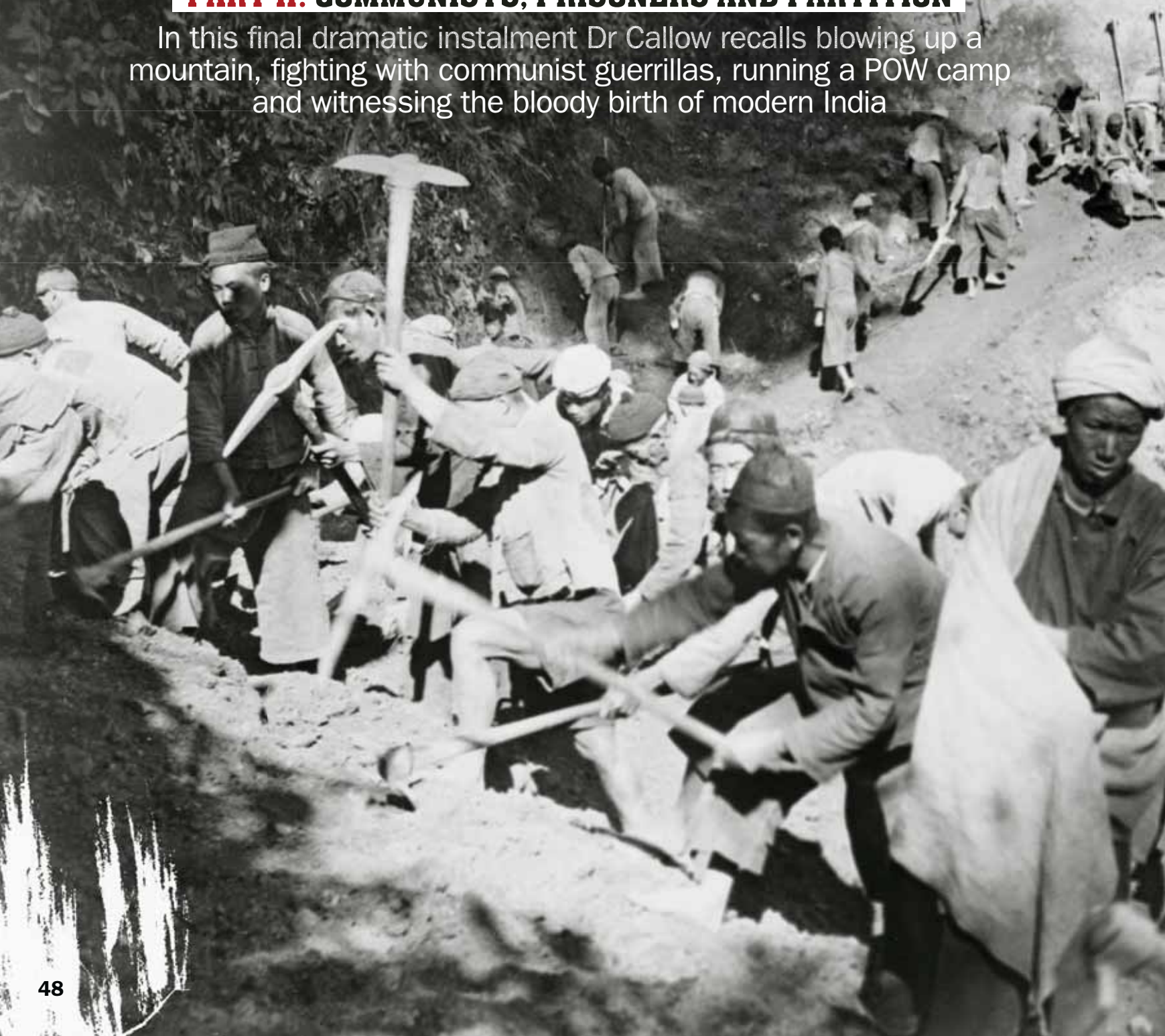
INTERVIEW WITH

DR ROBERT CALLOW

FAR EAST COMMANDO

PART II: COMMUNISTS, PRISONERS AND PARTITION

In this final dramatic instalment Dr Callow recalls blowing up a mountain, fighting with communist guerrillas, running a POW camp and witnessing the bloody birth of modern India



Burmese and Chinese labourers use hand tools to reopen the Burma Road in southwest China, 1944. On another occasion local Chinese people helped Callow to blow up a mountain on a similar road



WORDS TOM GARNER

There were mass celebrations in Britain when Nazi Germany unconditionally surrendered on 8 May 1945. To many it was a huge sigh of relief that the war in Europe had ended after years of death and destruction on a scale that even dwarfed World War I. Nevertheless, World War II was not actually over, and the nightmarish conflict against Japan continued in the Far East for months afterwards. To British soldiers like Robert Callow, who were still vigorously fighting the Japanese, VE Day meant very little in what remained an extremely bloody war: "Churchill declared VE Day in Europe in May 1945 but we lost 4,000 men between May and August."

At that point Callow had only just turned 20, but he was already an experienced explosives expert and polyglot who had been destroying Japanese bridges behind enemy lines in Burma between 1943-44. Callow was a Royal Engineer who fought as a commando in Force 136, Inter-Services Liaison Department but his initial Burmese experiences were only the beginning of an adventurous military career. Callow witnessed momentous events in China, Malaya and India by the end of the 1940s and met several giants of Asian history along the way.

Blowing up mountains

Now a captain, Callow left Burma a few months before VE Day and went into China with other members of Force 136. Their task was to assist Chinese forces and prevent the retreating Japanese army from escaping from Burma through the country. In preparation for this, Callow detonated a large explosion in September 1944 near Lashio. "When the Japanese were trying to get out back into China towards the end of the war I blew up and brought down a mountainside on a convoy of five lorries driven by Koreans."

Although Lashio sat in Burma, it had a significant Chinese population, and the mountain was strategically positioned over a road towards China. Callow and his men worked with the local population. "We used the local Chinese with their packhorses to carry the bulk of the slow explosives and fill the top caves with them. The road was on the hillside and there were support piers below us so I used the nitro-glycerine to blow up the piers."

When everything was prepared Callow waited for the enemy convoy to pass below. "I was positioned away from it all and as soon as I heard the explosives detonate at the top I then blew the bottom, and that brought down the convoy sitting on the road. They started sliding down the hill, but then the mountain also came down and took away a whole hillside of about 1,000 feet (300 metres). All of the convoy went down and it only took a few seconds... the mountain [fell] on top of them. It all went in one go and we said, 'Hooley, it's Bonfire Night!'"

Callow respected the Japanese as soldiers but grew to despise the Koreans fighting alongside the Japanese, who were often responsible for abusing Allied POWs. Although he didn't usually think much about his operational successes he was pleased with this particular mission: "I was delighted with this one because they were Koreans, who were the real sods. The Japanese didn't trust them and the Koreans were the ones doing all the atrocities on our POWs so we had no compunction about killing them. In fact the only man I personally killed was a Korean when we

"THE KOREANS WERE THE ONES DOING ALL THE ATROCITIES ON OUR POWS SO WE HAD NO COMPUNCTION ABOUT KILLING THEM. IN FACT THE ONLY MAN I PERSONALLY KILLED WAS A KOREAN WHEN WE WENT INTO A CAMP TO TRY AND STEAL FOOD, AND I BAYONETED HIM"

went into a camp to try and steal food, and I bayoneted him."

Blowing up the mountain resulted in the destruction of five lorries and the deaths of 25 enemy soldiers, but Callow remained unmoved by the casualties: "There was no feeling about it because you don't know them and it's war."

Adventures in China

By late 1944 Callow had parachuted into China itself, and he was promoted in order to successfully liaise with the Chinese. "When we got into China the Chinese would talk down to a captain so we all became majors." Callow had arrived in a country that was not just ravaged by the Japanese but also deeply politically divided between the ruling republican Nationalists and Communist revolutionaries.

Callow later realised that the British assistance was actually a cynical manoeuvre from the prime minister. "The Japanese had to get over to the east of China because their troops were coming from Manchuria and trying to join up. Churchill sent one lot of us to Chongqing to the Nationalists' headquarters, who were then in power and were the ones who eventually fought Mao [Zedong]. They were the big shots, but Churchill was a louse because he sent 300 men to assist the Nationalists but also men to help the Communists. It was really sinister, and he did it all to eject the Japanese."

Such is Callow's antipathy towards Churchill's actions in the Far East that he has deliberately delayed publishing his memoirs. "My books

Robert Callow (second row, seated, third from left) with 430 Field Company, Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners shortly after the Morib landings in Malaya, 1945



Left: Allied leaders including Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill meet at the Cairo Conference, November 1943. Of the pictured historical figures Callow met Chiang Kai-shek (front row, far left), Louis Mountbatten (back row, second from right) and Adrian Carton de Wiart (back row, far right)

Right: Callow will publish his memoirs in 2021 to coincide with the release of unpublished government documents to show "what a louse" Winston Churchill was with regard to his Far East policies during WWII

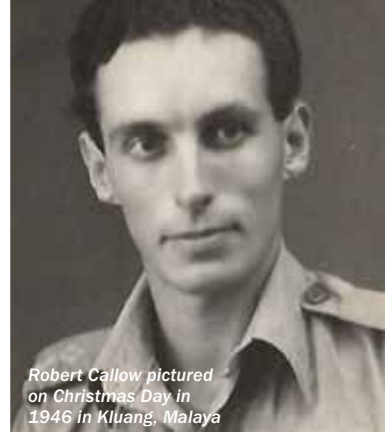


*Wrecked buildings
after communal riots
in Amritsar, 1947.
Although it is the Sikh
capital, 50 per cent of
the city's population
was Muslim, and
fighting broke out
over whether Amritsar
should be incorporated
into India or Pakistan*

**"CALLOW HAD ARRIVED IN A
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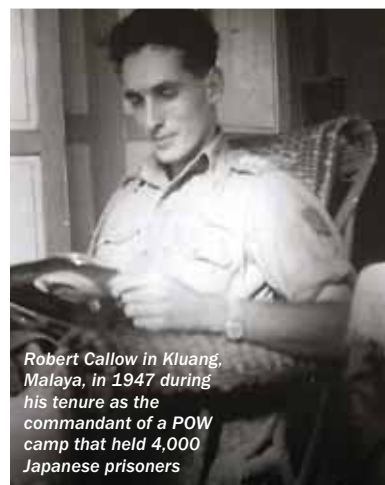
Japanese prisoners of war in Guam, 15 August 1945. As the commandant of a POW camp at Kluang, Callow had to refer to the prisoners as "surrendered personnel" in order to make them work



Robert Callow pictured on Christmas Day in 1946 in Kluang, Malaya



Above: The flag of the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). Callow worked closely with the MPAJA and served as Chin Peng's demolition man



Robert Callow in Kluang, Malaya, in 1947 during his tenure as the commandant of a POW camp that held 4,000 Japanese prisoners

are coming out in 2021 at the same time that Churchill's papers are being published, and they will show that he was playing dirty and betting on both horses. I didn't know anything about this at the time and it's only since that I've been able to put it all together. He was a bastard really, but he was a politician. My father used to say, 'Shoot all the politicians!' and he was right."

Callow remained in China until February 1945. During that time he met Yee-Wai, the woman who would become his wife. Yee-Wai came from a prominent Nationalist family with military connections. "I met my second wife briefly in China because her uncle was Lieutenant General Auyang Sik-Baag who was in command of the Chinese KMT (Kuomintang) Nationalist Seventh Army. I had learnt some Cantonese because we were in that area so I could speak to her politely, but to the Chinese I was a 'bloody foreigner' so I wasn't encouraged to mix with her."

Although he was a Nationalist, Auyang put his country above politics and was active in assisting his rivals to eject the Japanese with Callow's assistance. "He gave ammunition to communist guerrillas against the Japanese. I know he did that because we would supply them and bring them in."

Because of Callow's connections with Auyang, he was briefly brought into contact with

Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Nationalist Republic of China. However, Callow does not place great emphasis on meeting him. "Chiang Kai-shek was the boss of the KMT and they were all at the same military academy together. I met him through Auyang, but I didn't speak to him because I was in my early 20s of course and only very junior."

Conversely, Callow also became acquainted with Zhou Enlai who later became Mao Zedong's deputy and the first premier of Communist China after the revolution. "After I'd been with Auyang Sik-Baag I was sent on to Chaozhou. Churchill had sent about 300 men to Chongqing with the [Nationalist] government but I went to Zhou Enlai, who was actually a Communist. So Churchill was sending us to both the Communists and the Nationalists."

"THEY WERE GOING TO LEAVE THIS WOMAN IN THE JUNGLE, BUT I INSISTED ON TAKING HER WITH ME AND I DRAGGED HER ON A FRAME MADE OF TWO STICKS"

Callow recalled Zhou as an intelligent, urbane character: "He was a very good man, although he couldn't speak Cantonese and I couldn't speak Mandarin so we used to communicate in French. He'd been in Belgium and had a French-speaking girlfriend so that's how we communicated. Mao was absolutely crazy for him, but I never met Mao thank God!"

Fighting in Malaya

Callow left China in February 1945 and briefly returned to England before he was redeployed to the Far East between April and May. His destination this time was Malaya, which was then under Japanese occupation. Callow's experiences with communists in China led him to Chin Peng, the leader of the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). As the future leader of the Malayan Communist Party, Chin would subsequently lead the guerrilla insurgency against the British during the Malayan Emergency (1948-60), but during World War II he actively cooperated with them to eject the Japanese.

Fluent in Malay, Callow knew Chin well. "MI6 told him that I was with the communists [in China] and that was the reason why I was sent there. He was from Grik, which is in northern Kedah with aboriginal people in the jungle, and I was dealing with everything in that area to help the Malayan people defeat the Japanese army.

Indian soldiers walk through the debris of a building during unrest in Amritsar following the partition of India, August 1947. Callow remembered being "horrified" by what he saw in the city



That's what Force 136 was about so I was sent up to that area and I knew him personally. He was a straightforward communist."

Callow's explosives expertise and Burmese experience proved useful to Chin. "It was the same as in Burma: I was Chin's demolition man to blow up bridges and to contact Ceylon on long-range radios. He was the leader of groups of about 12 people in the jungle so I was in one of the groups. All of the guerrillas knew me because I spoke the languages and I was 'one of them'. That's the reason I trained to know their languages and customs, because I lived like them. I was also useful to them because I knew everything and everybody."

The MPAJA's fight against the Japanese was all-consuming and many women served alongside the men, including one that Callow saved from death. "They had women couriers and when one of them caught pneumonia they wanted to leave her. They were going to leave this woman in the jungle, but I insisted on taking her with me, and I dragged her on a frame made of two sticks."

Callow later returned to Malaya in 1953 during the Malayan Emergency in a civilian capacity working with the Public Works Department. As a former comrade of Chin, his safety from the communist guerrilla campaign was assured. "Nobody touched me because I'd fought with the communists against the

"CALLOW HAS HAD TO REMAIN APOLITICAL: 'I'M NOT A COMMUNIST, I'M WITH EVERYBODY BECAUSE OTHERWISE I'D BE DEAD!'"

Japanese and knew Chin Peng. I didn't see him during the Emergency but his family were still in Grik and I built a rest house there."

Far from being considered an enemy, Callow was regarded as an adopted Malayan. "I told the people in MI6 who were responsible for field work that I was going and they would tell the communists. To them I was an old friend and you don't kick or kill your old friends." However, due to his work with nationalist and communist forces during World War II Callow has had to remain apolitical: "I'm not a communist, I'm with everybody because otherwise I'd be dead!"

By the time VJ Day was declared on 15 August 1945 Callow was still in Malaya but was about to be deployed to Japan. "When the Japanese surrendered we were waiting to go back to India to get on a ship to take us to Japan. Thank God it never happened because the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had

occurred. Consequently, had the war continued we would have been sent to Japan and I wouldn't be talking to you now."

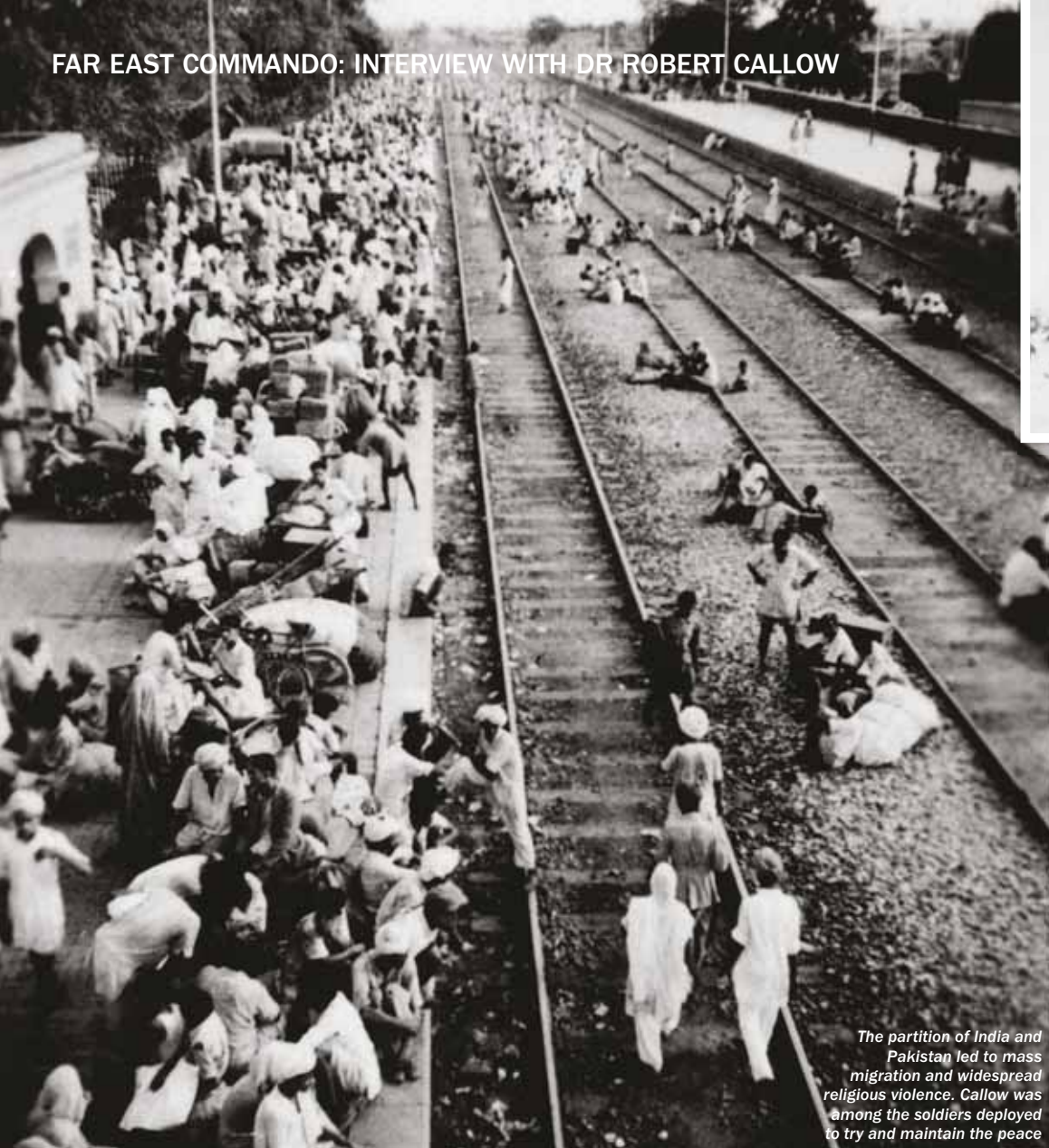
Nevertheless, Callow was not sent home and was instead transferred from combat duties to an altogether different task: guarding Japanese prisoners of war.

"Surrendered personnel"

Callow was by now seconded to the Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners in the Indian army, which was a regiment made up of Tamil soldiers. Callow has fond memories of the Tamils, describing them as "very good indeed, with a delightful sense of humour." Nonetheless, the task he and his men faced was daunting. Japanese soldiers were famous for not surrendering to Allied soldiers, but those that did needed careful management.

Despite only being in his early 20s Callow became a commandant of a POW camp that guarded 4,000 Japanese prisoners at Kluang in the Malayan province of Johor. In order to make the prisoners work Callow had to be delicate about their status. "We didn't call them Japanese 'prisoners of war': we said they were 'surrendered personnel.'"

Once this important distinction was made Callow found that the Japanese were able workers. "We could make them work. We couldn't make 'prisoners of war' work but



The partition of India and Pakistan led to mass migration and widespread religious violence. Callow was among the soldiers deployed to try and maintain the peace



Above: Lord Louis Mountbatten, the supreme Allied commander of South East Asia Command. Callow, who briefly met him, believed that Mountbatten withdrew the British too hastily from India during his tenure as the last viceroy



we could with 'surrendered personnel'. They surrendered because the emperor had ordered them to so therefore we could make them work. They had to obey their officers and he [the emperor] was the head officer. I was building camps with the Japanese and they were very good. You gave them an order and it would be completely carried out. They must obey you so therefore they had to obey me."

However, disease was rampant, with many prisoners contracting the unfortunately named Japanese encephalitis. "When I was in charge of the Japanese a lot of them had got Japanese encephalitis – which they had brought to Burma – and they fell down quickly. You get bitten by a mosquito that has bitten animals that have encephalitis. 60 per cent of people die of it and 40 per cent survive. The disease causes your thalamus in your brain to misinterpret, and it doesn't know which is up and down so therefore you fall over."

Callow would also contract the same disease a few years later. "I was in Malaysia in the 1950s and six of us were bitten with encephalitis. I knew about it from before, but I didn't realise this was going to be my part in it. Like chicken pox, it stays in your bloodstream. If I stand up I will fall backwards and that's why I was in hospital recently having surgery because I collapse. I've had it for years."

"OUR BOAT HAD SOFT EXPLOSIVES ON IT AND THEY WENT 'WOMPH!' IN A BIG FLAME THAT KILLED THE JAPANESE AND BLEW ME OFF THE BRIDGE STRAIGHT INTO THE SEA"

Away from the risk of disease Callow was still vulnerable to the detritus of conflict, and while he was commandant he fell foul of sea mines that he had actually helped to lay during the war. "I was in north Malaya and we still had all our explosives on RMAF Butterworth Airfield. Since I was into explosives I was told to take them and dump them in the sea, which I did. We had a little low boat of about 50 feet (15 metres) and I was on the bridge at the back stripped to the waist. I had six Japanese prisoners loading at the front and we hit one of those mines."

The result was immediate destruction. "Our boat had soft explosives on it and they went 'Womph!' in a big flame that killed the Japanese and blew me off the bridge straight

into the sea. We were about 400 yards (365 metres) from the shore at Jerejak Island." Callow credits his lone survival to the sea he landed in. "Being blown into the sea was actually the best thing to happen because the sea water saved me, but I've still got a scar on my back. I was picked up and taken to the military hospital, and for six months they threw buckets of salt water over me to keep the salt in on the burns. It was almost the death of me, but that's life."

Callow ran the Kluang POW camp between 1945-47, but in 1947 his regiment was deployed to the Indian subcontinent to stem the carnage in partitioned India.

Bloodshed in Amritsar

The former British Raj had gained its independence from Britain in mid August 1947, but the country had been divided into the two independent dominion states of India and Pakistan. The new artificial border known as the 'Radcliffe Line' ran through the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab and separated the majority Hindu and Muslim populations from each other. But the hasty partition was a disaster, triggering mass riots and migrations.

Around 14-16 million people were displaced as Muslims headed towards Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs travelled to India, with many



British soldiers of the Wiltshire Regiment leave Amritsar's police headquarters to go on a peacekeeping patrol. Callow would have gone on similar patrols with the Madras Sappers

travelling on foot. Religious tensions were also exposed as mass killings from opposing communities became rampant. It is estimated that between 200,000 and 2 million people were killed during the partition, and up to 100,000 women were raped or abducted. It was into this scene of mass horror that Callow and the Madras Sappers were sent to the Sikh capital of Amritsar in the Punjab.

Amritsar was the scene of some of the worst violence during partition. The full figures will never be known, but Sikhs killed at least 3,000 Muslims in one day in September 1947. As part of the Indian army, Callow and the Madras Sappers were sent to the city to stem the bloodshed. "They sent us because I was with the Tamils and we had to try and stop some of the killing."

Callow recalled that the deployment of Tamil soldiers for anti-riot duties was a deliberate move amid the religious tension. "All the other [regiments] were either exclusively Muslim, Hindu or Christian etc. but the Tamils were a mixture of religions. They also had nothing to do with the northern Indians so therefore they were treated more or less as neutral."

While he was in Amritsar, Callow witnessed some horrendous scenes. "We had nothing to do with either the Muslims or the others and we had to stop the killing. The women were

"AMRITSAR WAS THE SCENE OF SOME OF THE WORST VIOLENCE DURING PARTITION. THE FULL FIGURES WILL NEVER BE KNOWN, BUT SIKHS KILLED AT LEAST 3,000 MUSLIMS IN ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER 1947. AS PART OF THE INDIAN ARMY, CALLOW AND THE MADRAS SAPPERS WERE SENT TO THE CITY TO STEM THE BLOODSHED"

CALLOW'S ACQUAINTANCES

DURING THE 1940S ROBERT CALLOW MET AND EVEN FOUGHT WITH SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL FIGURES, INCLUDING SEVERAL WHO HAD A GREAT IMPACT ON 20TH-CENTURY ASIAN HISTORY



ADRIAN CARTON DE WIART (1880-1963)

Carton de Wiart, an eye-patch wearing, one-handed, Belgian-born British Army officer, personally selected Callow for commando service. Carton de Wiart fought in three major conflicts across six decades and won a Victoria Cross during the Battle of the Somme. Although he was wounded eight times in World War I alone, he once said that "war was in my blood".



CHIANG KAI-SHEK (1887-1975)

Chiang was the powerful head of the Nationalist government of China from 1928-49, who reunified the country in the inter-war period as well as ostensibly leading it through World War II. However, Chiang was defeated during the Communist Revolution between 1946-49. Chiang fled with the remnants of his government and founded the state of Taiwan, which is still officially known as the 'Republic of China'.



CHIN PENG (1924-2013)

An ethnically Chinese, Malayan communist guerrilla leader, Chin fought with the British during World War II and subsequently against them during the Malayan Emergency. The British managed to defeat him and he fled to Thailand, although he later waged another unsuccessful campaign against independent Malaysia. Throughout all this he led the Malayan Communist Party from 1947-89.



WILLIAM SLIM (1891-1970)

As the commander of the British 14th Army, Slim turned back an attempted Japanese invasion of India before defeating its armies in Burma. Callow remembered him as a "soldier's soldier who didn't call a 'spade a spade' but a 'bloody shovel'!"



ZHOU ENLAI (1898-1976)

The first premier of the People's Republic of China played a major role in the Chinese Communist Revolution and was second only to Mao Zedong in importance between 1949-76. Unlike Mao, Zhou was renowned for his charm and diplomatic skills, which most famously bore fruit in the historic meeting between Mao and American President Richard Nixon in 1972.

Burnt out and ruined buildings in the Katra Jaimal Singh area of Amritsar, March 1947



Above: Dr Callow with the lord mayor of Coventry, Ram Lakha in 2005. Callow is the only surviving member of the city's branch of the Burma Star Association

“CALLOW BELIEVED THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CARNAGE ULTIMATELY RESTS WITH THE LAST BRITISH VICEROY’S DECISION TO MAKE A HASTY WITHDRAWAL FROM INDIA”

throwing themselves into the wells because the Muslims were raping them. Our troops would go towards the rioters with bayonets fixed and when they saw that we were neither Muslim nor Hindu they backed off. We were not dealing with soldiers but civilians, and I was doing this for about two months. We were horrified at what was going on.”

Callow believed that the responsibility for the carnage ultimately rests with the last British viceroy’s decision to make a hasty withdrawal from India: “It was Mountbatten’s idea to do it. When Malaya got its independence it took ten years, but he did it in two to three months.”

Callow finally returned to Britain later that year, but the reception was underwhelming. “It

was actually very disappointing when I came home in 1947. It was a rainy day, nobody came to the docks to see us, there were no flags and nobody wanted to know. The war had been over for two years, but it ultimately didn’t matter because we were home.”

“Still in the army”

Callow went on to lead an adventurous life after his wartime experiences and spent decades living in the Far East before permanently returning to England. He eventually married Yee-Wai and, among other achievements, he obtained a doctorate in neurophysics, became the dean of the engineering faculty at Hong Kong University

and also helped to set up the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in the same territory.

Throughout this time Callow worked for the Ministry of Overseas Development, where his linguistic skills led him to advise, among other people, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who he described as “very nice indeed, very modest”.

Remarkably, Dr Callow has never been demobilised and is still active as a consultant for the British government. “I’m still in the army, and it never lets you go, but it’s only 70 years service! I’ve had several cases to look into the question of neurophysics in helicopter or tank drivers for example. The ministry pays my pension but they will ring me up and tell me what they want because my doctorate deals with the response to physical stress.”

Dr Robert Callow has led, by any measure, an extraordinary life, but when asked about how he survived so many dangerous wartime experiences his answer is simple: “Bloody-mindedness... and pure chance.”

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



Dr Robert Callow is the welfare officer for the Coventry branch of the Burma Star Association, which is part of the British Legion, the United Kingdom’s largest armed forces charity. It upholds the memory of the fallen and provides lifelong support for the armed forces community, including serving men and women, veterans and their families.
For more information visit: www.britishlegion.org.uk

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■ **SERBIA'S BLOODYMINDED 1914: PART I** ■

HUMILIATING THE HABSBURGS

The murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia were the ignition for World War I, yet the actual conflict in the Balkans has faded from popular memory. No mere sideshow, the Serbian campaign of 1914 gave the Entente its first victory and exposed the frailty of Germany's Habsburg ally

Serbian soldiers line a trench securing the high ground. Serbian troops dug in with the expectation of Austria-Hungary's advance

WORDS JAMES HOARE



Though the Kingdom of Serbia had emerged from the First and Second Balkan Wars (1912-13 and 1913) as the undisputed military powerhouse of the Balkans, nearly doubling its territory at the expense of the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, the reality of the situation was that Serbia was in no condition for a scrap in 1914. National confidence – never in short supply in a country obsessed with a nationalist calling to unite the South Slavs – was sky high. While its army was experienced and blooded, Serbia's economy had been battered by conflict and its new, rural provinces from Turkey's semi-feudal hinterland yielded few material benefits.

Furthermore, Serbia was now home to minorities with aspirations and grievances of their own. They proved as hostile to their new Serbian overlords as Bosnian Serbs, like the assassin Gavrilo Princip, were to Austria-Hungary. A cautious customs

and military union with the mountainous Kingdom of Montenegro – considered kin in language, identity and Orthodox rite – had begun in 1914, but on the eve of war that remained the only concession to state-building, and all this contributed to the war effort in real terms was 35,000 glorified clan levies with nothing resembling a professional officer class.

However, Austria-Hungary too was supremely confident. The Kaiserlich und Königlich (Imperial and Royal) troops gathered at its borders overwhelmingly outnumbered Serbia's fighting forces and outclassed them in materiel.

Troops packed into trains raucously sang out, "Every shot – one Russian/ Every stroke – one Frenchman/ Those in Serbia have to die too!" as they clattered towards their divisions.

Although battle-hardened, flushed with its earlier victories and able to muster an estimated 200-250,000 fighting men, the lack of modern

equipment (and uniforms, some men marched without boots) reduced the Serbian army to 180,000 combat-ready infantry, supported by 200 machine guns and 528 artillery pieces (with only 381 of them being quick-loading).

The Austro-Hungarian Balkan Army, meanwhile, was able to field some 320,000 infantry, 744 artillery pieces and 486 machine guns, plus support from riverine monitors and support vessels entering the Sava from the Danube.

Depleted stores from the First and Second Balkan Wars also placed a very low ceiling on how long Serbia could keep fighting, forcing them to rely on long, vulnerable resupply routes through neutral (but sympathetic) Greece.

Plans drawn up by Chief of Staff Conrad von Hötzendorf in 1909 had prepared Austria-Hungary for war in the Balkans against Serbia, or against both Serbia and Russia. This 1909 doctrine divided their forces into Echelon A, Echelon B and Minimalgruppe Balkan. Assuming Italy and Romania honoured their treaty

"SERBIA WAS NOW HOME TO MINORITIES WITH ASPIRATIONS AND GRIEVANCES OF THEIR OWN. THEY PROVED AS HOSTILE TO THEIR NEW SERBIAN OVERLORDS AS BOSNIAN SERBS, LIKE THE ASSASSIN GAVRILLO PRINCIP, WERE TO AUSTRIA-HUNGARY"



commitments and rallied to Austria-Hungary's cause (they wouldn't, but that's another story), Echelon A (the largest) would concentrate on Russia, while the Minimalgruppe Balkan took up a defensive position against Serbia. Meanwhile, Echelon B was to support operations against Russia, or in a scenario in which Russia abandoned Serbia, support Minimalgruppe Balkan in a Balkan offensive.

What Hötzen's plan didn't account for was two offensive campaigns running simultaneously against Russia and Serbia. Russia's early (and surprisingly swift) partial mobilisation on 29 July had spooked Austria-Hungary and Germany, necessitating rapid action in the east. In addition, recent conflicts were judged to have weakened the Serbian army to the point where Austria-Hungary's Balkan Army could quickly accomplish an invasion of Serbia. But most crucially, the murder of the Habsburg heir by revolutionaries armed and directed by a cabal within Serbian military intelligence meant that punishing Serbia was a non-negotiable priority for Vienna.

The lie of the land

With the Dinaric Alps running north to south through the Balkans in the west, invading forces from antiquity had typically marched in parallel through the broad basin that began near the Serbian capital Belgrade and led through the heart of the country. The northern border with the Austro-Hungarian Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia was marked by the Sava, a Danube tributary with only one bridge at Belgrade, and the Danube itself. The western border with the Austro-Hungarian protectorate of Bosnia and Herzegovina was separated by the River Drina and the rugged Dinarics, which

would naturally favour the defender and make any advance punishingly slow.

Uniquely vulnerable, Belgrade was perched on the banks of the Sava within artillery range of the town of Semlin (now Zemun) in Croatia-Slavonia. Government institutions were withdrawn to the interior, and the Belgrade garrison left the walls for the high ground southwest of the city, while further south three army groups mustered over a 40 to 60-kilometre (25 to 37-mile) area, to cover the most likely invasion route into northern and central Serbia.

Serbia's mobilisation order on 25 July summoned three waves of soldiers, as it had done in the Balkan Wars. First line (aged 21-31) and second line (aged 32-37) troops were spread across the three army groups, while third line troops (aged 18-20 and 38-50) were a territorial force, mainly kept on garrison and guard duty. While first line and second line units were fully uniformed, supplies simply didn't stretch to the third line, and many wore civilian clothes, embellished by army greatcoats and the ubiquitous šajkaca cap.

First Army, made up of eight cavalry squadrons, 40 infantry battalions and 90 guns, was headquartered at Raca on the right flank of the deployment area, while the left flank was

"EACH ARMY WAS ADDITIONALLY ACCOMPANIED BY BANDS OF CHETNIK IRREGULARS WHO HAD PROVEN THEIR WORTH BEHIND THE LINES IN EARLIER WARS"

held by Third Army, the weakest of the three groups, consisting of six cavalry squadrons, 28 infantry battalions and 72 guns. In the centre was the larger of the three, Second Army, which consisted of 13 cavalry squadrons, 40 infantry battalions and 90 guns.

First Army was led by General Petar Bojovic, Second Army by General Stepan 'Stepa' Stepanovic, and Third Army by the fascinating figure of General Pavle Jurišić Šturm. Born Paul Sturm in Germany, he had graduated from the Prussian Military Academy and French War Academy but travelled to Serbia in 1876 to fight against the Ottoman Empire. After the war he stayed, took a Serbian name and rose through the ranks. All three men had led armies in the First and Second Balkan Wars and had commanded troops in the Serbo-Turkish War (1876-1878) and Serbo-Bulgarian War (1885). Overall command was held by Field Marshal Radomir Putnik, who had unsuccessfully tried to resign as chief of staff due to ill-health, but King Petar I insisted that his capable old warhorse stay. Bizarrely, Putnik had been taking the waters in an Austrian spa when war was declared and was allowed home, either out of old world chivalry or because he was seen as a spent force. Meanwhile, the Serbian war plans were held in Putnik's safe and he held the only key, forcing the army high command to break it open to retrieve their mobilisation orders.

East of the Bosnian frontier, the Užice Army (two squadrons of cavalry, 24 infantry battalions and 54 guns) took up a defensive position around the town of the same name under the command of General Miloš Božanovic, an ally of the paramilitary Black Hand accused of orchestrating the assassination of Franz Ferdinand.

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

SOUTH SLAVS FOUGHT FOR BOTH SIDES IN WHAT WAS TO BECOME A BITTER THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

At the time of World War I the South Slavs were a people united by a common language and divided by almost everything else. Consisting broadly of four groups of Serbo-Croat speakers – Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Croats (Roman Catholics, using the Latin alphabet), Serbs and Montenegrins (both Eastern Orthodox, using the Cyrillic alphabet) – and three linguistic cousins; closely Slovenes, more distantly Macedonians and Bulgarians.

These populations (along with non-South Slavs, such as Germans, Hungarians, Greeks, Jews, Roma and Sinti, Albanians and Vlachs) could be found across the Balkans, regardless of national boundaries. Within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bosniaks, Croats and Slovenes were generally perceived as loyal to the Habsburg crown, while Serbs were widely seen as potential fifth columnists.

These divisions and distinctions played a role in the Serbian campaign from the outset. With the mobilisation of the Serbian army, Serbs living in Habsburg lands crossed the border to serve with their kin against their neighbours. This betrayal shouldn't have been a surprise. In the immediate aftermath of Franz Ferdinand's assassination, Bosnia and Herzegovina's military governor Oscar Potiorek (a Slovene) organised vicious reprisals against Bosnia's Serb population.

In these reprisals, shops were looted, men were beaten in the street, and a predominantly Bosniak Schutzkorps militia was formed to combat suspected Serb nationalists and guerillas. An estimated 5,500 Serbs were arrested in Bosnia and Herzegovina, between 700 and 2,200 died in prison while 460 were executed. A further 5,200 Bosnian Serb families were forcibly expelled from the country in a pattern that would be tragically echoed later in the 20th century.

South Slavs were a significant minority in the KuK forces. 563,400 (31.3 per cent) of Austria-Hungary's total manpower could be identified as Serb, Croat or Bosniak, and a further two per cent (50,400) were Slovene. With the outbreak of war, Serbs in the Balkan Army were removed from combat units and placed in labour detachments.

THE BATTLING BOSNIANS

Distinguished from other Austro-Hungarian units by their field grey fez (reddish brown for dress), four regiments of Bosnian-Herzegovinian infantry and one Feldjägerbataillon (Field Rifles Battalion) were recruited in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the outbreak of war 41 per cent of NCOs and other ranks were Muslims, 29 per cent Serbian Orthodox and 25 per cent Roman Catholic, but all wore the fez – associated with Muslims in the Ottoman Empire – regardless of faith. In 1914 esprit de corps was high enough for the Bosnian-Herzegovinian infantry to be considered elite in comparison to the generally poor levels of motivation and training across the KuK.

“ALL WORE THE FEZ – ASSOCIATED WITH MUSLIMS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE – REGARDLESS OF FAITH”



Infantry from Bosnia and Herzegovina fighting for the Austro-Hungarian Empire wearing the distinctive fez

“THE SOUTH SLAVS WERE UNITED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE AND DIVIDED BY ALMOST EVERYTHING ELSE”

Serbs are executed in Herzegovina a protectorate of Austria-Hungary, in 1914. Serbs suffered violent reprisals in Bosnia and Herzegovina



A burial procession for a fallen Serbian soldier passes. The Opening days of World War I saw numerous casualties



Austro-Hungarian artillery fires near the town of Semlin

Each army was additionally accompanied by bands of chetnik irregulars, who had proven their worth behind enemy lines in earlier wars. Their modus operandi was to don enemy uniform and infiltrate the rearguard, raiding and sabotaging supply lines and instigating insurrection among the empire's South Slavs.

Regional detachments (of which the Užice Army was the largest), made up of third line soldiers, chetniks and obsolete artillery pieces, were tasked with delaying the enemy advance, and if the front washed over them continuing the struggle as guerillas. Finally, the largely irrelevant Montenegrin army deployed in four detachments along its 800-kilometre (500-mile) border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. They were spread thinly and were incapable of either defence or assault in any real depth.

The invasion begins

With the declaration of war on 28 July, the Austro-Hungarian Second Army (attached to the Balkan Army from Echelon B), which was deployed along the Sava and Danube, began to probe the Serbian defences. Artillery on the Austro-Hungarian shore pummelled towns on the opposite bank, and firefights erupted as crossings were attempted and beaten back by Serbian territorial detachments. Belgrade, Obrenovac and Šabac paid a particularly heavy price as the bombardment continued into August.

The largest of the three KuK (Kaiserlich und Königlich) army groups, Second Army, consisted of 135 infantry battalions, 43.5 cavalry squadrons and 300 guns, under the command of General Eduard von Böhm-Ermolli. Perversely,

despite being best suited to push south into Serbia's north-south basin, take Belgrade and punch the heart out of the Serbian will to fight, Second Army was committed only to diversionary operations on the border. In a confusion between Hötendorf's 1909 war plans and reality, it was judged that the Serbian campaign would be wrapped up quickly and by mid-August Second Army would pivot towards Russia.

Instead, the invasion would be the responsibility of Fifth Army (93,000 infantry in 79.5 battalions, 14.5 cavalry squadrons and 212 guns) and Sixth Army (118,000 infantry in 94.5 battalions, 5.5 cavalry squadrons and 162 guns). While the former was headquartered at Brcko in the northeastern corner of Bosnia and Herzegovina and deployed along the lower Drina, the latter was headquartered at Sarajevo and deployed along the Drina from Višegrad in the east of the country. The Balkan Army could also call on 36,000 garrison troops in the province.

Unlike Second Army, which benefited from rail links that terminated right at the border, Fifth and Sixth Armies were isolated by geography from effective reinforcement and resupply. Reliable communication between the Fifth and Sixth was difficult, and communication with the Second was largely non-existent. What's more, despite their relative proximity, the Fifth and Sixth were unable to efficiently trade units or move in support of one another as they advanced along stubborn hinterland.

In contrast with the commanders of Serbia's army groups, none of the Austro-Hungarian generals had seen war and, worse yet, overall commander Oskar Potiorek was a staff officer who had never served in the field. As the military governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1911, Potiorek had been responsible for Franz Ferdinand's security and saw it as his calling to humiliate what he saw as a nation of "pig farmers," declaring that, "I was spared at Sarajevo so that I may die avenging it!"

Skirmishes continued into August along the Danube and the Sava as Second Army made token efforts to cross, while on 3 August three battalions from the Lim detachment returned the favour along the porous Bosnian frontier, besieging the towns of Rudo and Uvac. By 7 August they were exchanging fire with Austro-Hungarian defenders of Visegrád, as territorials and irregulars swarmed across the upper Drina. Montenegrin troops shelled the port of Cattaro (now Kotor) and pushed into Herzegovina.

With Sixth Army based at Sarajevo and the towns between Foca and Visegrád more than ably defended by units of gendarmes, garrison troops and Schutzkorps militia, the antics of the Užice Army, the Montenegrins and assorted nationalists scrabbling over rocky mountain passes were only a nuisance. On 12 August the real show began as Fifth Army began advancing across the marshy lower Drina near Amajlija and Batar, hoping to charge the exposed left flank of the weak Serbian Third Army.

The Battle of Cer

In the August sun, the high cornfields stretching out in front of Fifth Army gave shelter to chetnik snipers, who picked off scouts and outriders, while the marsh made crossing painfully slow. Further down the line, territorial detachments put up unexpectedly fierce resistance, slowing the advance from foxholes and concealed artillery positions. Supply trains became confused, water ran out, and by the end of the first day only half the hot, thirsty and frustrated invasion force had made it across the river.

In the north, a Second Army division crossed the Sava and took the town of Šabac in a supporting action, and then called a halt. Strict operational parameters prohibited them from advancing too far into the Serbian interior, so they burned and looted instead. Unsure as to whether it was the KuK Second or the Fifth Army they should be worried about, Jurišić Šturm ordered his vulnerable Serbian Third Army to dig in at the foothills of Mount Cer while Stepanovic took the initiative and sent elements of Second Army towards the distant guns. Potiorek too saw the value of Mount Cer, hoping to use the high ground to the advantage of his superior artillery and sent elements of Fifth Army forward with all haste, while a heavy Bosnian mountain division of Sixth Army advanced to protect the Fifth's flanks.

Finally, in the early hours of 15 August Putnik came to the conclusion that Šabac was indeed a diversion. He ordered Third Army to hold out for as long as possible and then ordered Second Army on a night march to Cer – an ambitious prospect over unsurfaced roads and without modern communications.

As the humid day gave way to a thunderstorm on the night of the 15-16 August, the Serbian Combined Division – a forward element of Second Army – stumbled across the 21st Landwehr Infantry Division at the village of



Serbian infantry camped by the roadside as the weather turns and the rain sets in, 1914

HUMILIATING THE HABSBURGS

*Fighting erupts by a bridge
over the Sava River on 28
August 1914*





A Serbian soldier keeps watch along the river from a dug in position



Field Marshal Radomir Putnik held overall command of the Serbian forces

Tekeriš, on the slopes of the Cer. So complete was the surprise that many were bayoneted in their sleep by the attacking Serbs, and as more units from both sides arrived the confusion intensified. The total darkness, torrential rain and utter fatigue were no man's friend, but the familiar terrain and their experiences with ambushing proved advantageous to the Serbs.

The demoralised 21st Landwehr retreated. An attempted regroup found itself caught in a crossfire between newly arrived Serb units. The panic was so great that artillerymen cut loose their cannon and fled on the draught horses.

The Combined Division too was finally forced to retreat, having lost some 47 officers and 2,995 men during the night. Finally, at 10am Stepanovic arrived and quickly took control, reinforcing broken units and consolidating positions. Meanwhile Jurišić Sturm, in the heart of Fifth Army's advance, ordered a withdrawal to new defensive lines. The small Serbian Third Army was in serious danger of collapsing, but its opponents had lost their momentum, their supply lines were in tatters and there was little hope of reinforcement with such harsh terrain at their backs. Reluctantly, the KuK Second Army was committed to battle and its redeployment postponed.

Amid the carnage of attack and counterattack the fatal consequences of inexperience began to manifest in the Austro-Hungarian lines. In one harrowing scene, a regiment of Bosnian infantry set out from Šabac parade-style with its military band playing, marching right under the guns of the waiting Serbs. More catastrophic still, Second Army's General Karl Tersztyánszky von Nádas

interpreted a limited strategic withdrawal as full retreat. He reported back in triumph to Potiorek with the one hand, while with the other sent two divisions in pursuit. Rather than cutting down men as they fled, they crashed into Serb units with plenty of fight left in them. Tersztyánszky's phantasmagorical reports continued throughout the third day of the battle, and in the drizzle of the fourth day he discovered the state of the 'retreat' for himself. The IV Corps was marching in close columns down the road to Cer from Šabac when concealed positions of the Šumadija I Division opened up, slaughtering 240 men in the first few minutes alone. Šumadija I held Second Army's IV Corps up for the rest of the day.

After underestimating his opponents for so long, Tersztyánszky now began to overestimate them. Believing three divisions faced him rather than one, IV Corps halted all attacks that might have threatened the right flank of Second Army. The support that KuK Fifth Army desperately needed had stopped in its tracks. Badly bloodied, they withdrew back across the Drina on the night of 19 August. One soldier scribbled in his diary, "The army is beaten and is in headless, wild and chaotic flight." The panic was such that many drowned in the crossing, trampled by their fleeing comrades. With the northeast frontier secured, the Serbian Second Army retook Šabac on 21-24 August.

Serbia had lost 2,068 men, while a further 11,519 were wounded and 8,823 were captured or missing. Some 23,000 Austro-Hungarian troops were killed or wounded in the Battle of Cer – a casualty rate nearly 40 per cent higher than that of the defenders – achieving none of their objectives in the process. It was a humiliating defeat for one of the oldest empires in Europe against one of its youngest states, and against a backdrop of crushing defeats – the Russian offensive in East Prussia had failed and in the west the Germans were bearing down on Paris – it was a tonic to the Entente, and the 'Brave little Serbia' motif proved as potent to the press as 'Plucky little Belgium'.

Good press, however, does not win battles, and there were more desperate engagements to come. Experience of irregular warfare and fighting on home turf had given Putnik an incredible advantage over his more numerous opponent, but hiding in the mountains will only go so far when the shells run out.

BLACK SMOKE IN THE WHITE CITY

THE BOMBING OF BELGRADE WAS WORLD WAR I'S FIRST WAR CRIME

After the attempted river crossings of 28 July, Belgrade became the subject not of invasion but bombardment. In the early hours of 29 July shells fell on Kalemegdan fortress and spread across the city from Austro-Hungarian batteries at Semlin and Bežanija on the opposite bank of the river, striking indiscriminately at hotels, banks, embassies, churches, homes and setting alight the state tobacco factory. Shells fell for eight days and nights, by some miracle causing only one civilian casualty.

On 9 August the batteries opened up with the heaviest onslaught so far, cutting off water and electricity, hitting the train station, setting a coal yard ablaze and levelling the National Museum. This was a clear violation of the Hague Convention, which ruled that "all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals, and places where the sick and wounded are collected."

Austria-Hungary's indiscriminate bombardment caused widespread damage to civilian buildings in Belgrade



"THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF INEXPERIENCE BEGAN TO MANIFEST IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN LINES"

»»» COMING IN PART II

Serbia goes on an offensive it cannot afford, while Potiorek races against winter to redeem his humiliated Balkan Army. *History of War* issue 52 is on sale 22 February 2017.

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Heroes of the Victoria Cross

SIR WILLIAM PEELE

How one of the first recipients of the Victoria Cross was recommended for the award for not one, but three acts of valour

WORDS MARK SIMNER

As his name might suggest, Sir William Peel was the third – and favourite – son of Sir Robert Peel, the twice prime minister of Britain and father of modern-day policing. Yet it would not be in his father's political footsteps that the younger Peel would follow. Instead he decided on a career in the Royal Navy and a life at sea. He would go on to become one of the earliest recipients of the newly instituted Victoria Cross. Its awarding to Peel recognised not one but three acts of personal valour. However, Peel would not commit these gallant acts on the seas, for he would be thrown into the Crimean War on land.

Born in 1824 and educated at Harrow, Peel entered the navy in April 1838, first serving aboard the 104-gun first-rate ship-of-the-line *Princess Charlotte*, the flagship of Sir Robert Stopford, commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean. A little over two years later, Peel found himself involved in British naval operations off the Syrian coast, following which he saw service aboard the *Monarch* and the *Cambrian*, the latter of which cruised off China.

Returning to England in late 1843, Peel next joined the gunnery ship *Excellent* at Portsmouth and sat his naval exams for promotion to lieutenant the following year. He passed his tests with great credit, and promotion duly followed on 13 May 1844. The young lieutenant served in a series of other ships, including the *Cormorant* in the Pacific and *America*, from which he investigated events during the Oregon border dispute.

Following his time in America, Peel again returned to England and took up an appointment with the *Devastation* at Woolwich in February 1846. However, he soon moved to the *Constance* at Plymouth in May. On 27 June Peel was promoted to commander, taking command of the *Daring* on the North American and West Indies station the following year. Peel received a final promotion, to captain, on 10 January 1849.

Fearing a period on half pay, Peel further displayed his liking of adventure when he took the decision to explore the interior of Africa, where he hoped to improve the conditions of the inhabitants there. He prepared himself by studying Arabic and taking short tours of Egypt, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, Nazareth and Syria. By August 1851 Peel felt ready for his new exploits

and set off up the Nile, crossing the desert to Khartoum before proceeding to al-'Ubayd. Unfortunately, he suffered a serious attack of fever and ague and returned to England the following January, publishing an account of his journey later that year.

Peel's biggest adventure would be a far deadlier one, in the form of the Crimean War. The Ottoman Empire was in decline and the Russians sought to make territorial gains at Constantinople's expense. This was fiercely opposed by both the British and the French. The former was already engaged in a political confrontation with Russia, during what we today refer to as the 'Great Game'. However, a more immediate cause of the war was the quarrel over the rights of minority Christians in the Holy Land: France attempted to promote the rights of Roman Catholics, while the Russians did the same with the Eastern Orthodox Church.

As the political and religious wranglings came to a head, both Britain and France declared war against Russia on 28 March 1854, although Russia had already commenced military operations by occupying the Danubian Principalities in July the previous year. Some historians have described the Crimean War as one of the first true modern wars, in which new technologies were employed on an industrial scale. For over two years, hundreds of thousands of men would perish – either due to fighting or disease – and Peel was soon to be thrown into the thick of it.

Although operations had already begun elsewhere, the actual Crimean campaign, in

“FOR JOINING THE OFFICERS OF THE GRENADIER GUARDS, AND ASSISTING IN DEFENDING THE COLOURS OF THAT REGIMENT, WHEN HARD PRESSED AT THE SANDBAG BATTERY”

VC Recommendation

After the Crimean War,
Peel would receive his
Victoria Cross for several
acts of bravery

**“FOR HAVING... AT THE
GREATEST POSSIBLE RISK,
TAKEN UP A LIVE SHELL...
AND THROWN IT OVER
THE PARAPET... THEREBY
SAVING... THE LIVES OF THOSE
IMMEDIATELY ROUND IT”**

VC Recommendation

HEROES OF THE VICTORIA CROSS

which Peel was a protagonist, did not begin until September 1854. The objective of the allies was to take the port of Sevastopol on the Crimean Peninsula, which was the home of Russia's Black Sea fleet and was viewed as a threat to the Mediterranean. During a reconnaissance made in July, Sevastopol was found to be heavily fortified and defended by thousands of Russian troops. Hundreds of British and French ships transported the allied expeditionary forces to the peninsula, commencing the landing of troops at Calamita Bay on 14 September.

Despite the landings taking the Russians by surprise, the allied forces still needed to conduct an advance over land towards their goal of Sevastopol. It took some days to offload all the men, animals and stores from the ships, but on 20 September the first major clash of the Crimean campaign took place on the Alma River. As the allied forces,

under the joint command of FitzRoy James Henry Somerset (known as Lord Raglan) and Jacques Leroy de Saint Arnaud, advanced near to the river they suddenly came upon a large Russian force under the command of Alexander Menshikov, and a battle ensued. The Battle of the Alma ended in an allied victory, but they failed to pursue the retreating Russians and, it has been argued, missed a chance to capture Sevastopol early in the war.

Nevertheless, the siege of Sevastopol officially began on 17 October, and on the following day Peel committed his first act of valour. The captain had found himself ashore as part of the Naval Brigade, assisting in the siege work by supplying ammunition to the guns. Suddenly, a Russian shell landed near to where Peel was standing. Although it had not exploded, the fuse of the shell was still burning and it had come to rest among some powder cases stacked outside a magazine. Without hesitation, he picked up the shell and threw it over a parapet, and as the shell left his hand it exploded. Peel had saved the lives of the men around him as well as his own.

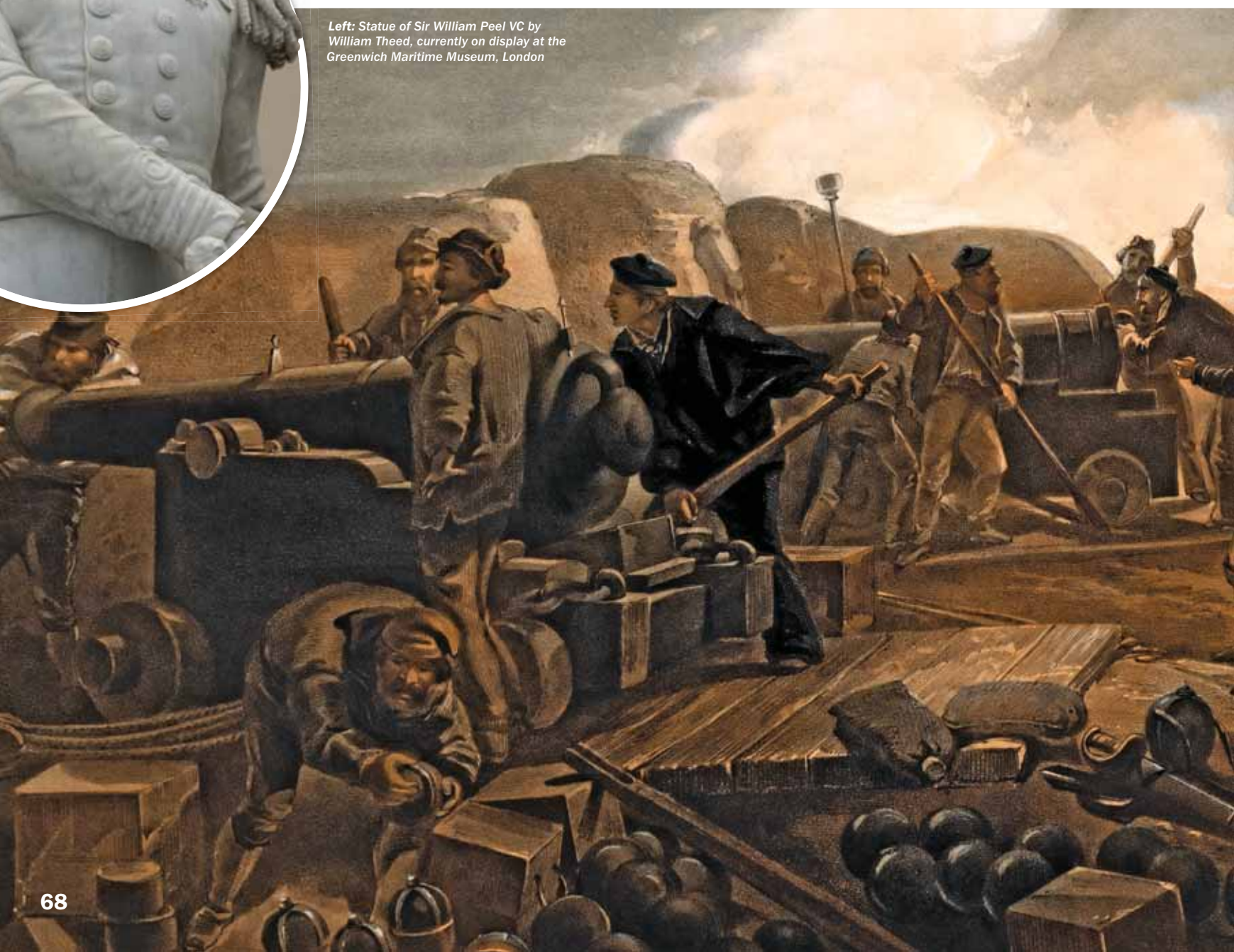
Meanwhile, the allies needed secure bases where supplies could be brought by sea. The French established theirs at a small port known

as Kamiesh, while the British took possession of a fishing harbour called Balaclava. The Russians decided to attack the latter on 25 October, but the ensuing clash of arms at the Battle of Balaclava ended somewhat indecisively, although the Russians failed to properly disrupt the British supply chain as they had hoped. The battle remains famous for the 'Thin Red Line' of the 93rd Highlanders and the infamous Charge of the Light Brigade into the 'Valley of Death'.

The next major clash of the campaign came on 5 November during the Battle of Inkerman, and it would be on this day that Peel committed his second act of valour. Although the Russian attack at Balaclava had failed, Menshikov realised that the allies were in a weaker position than he was. The Russian commander decided to launch a second attack in the hope of raising the siege of Sevastopol, but this 'Soldier's Battle' ended in an allied victory. During the fighting, a platoon of hard-pressed Grenadier Guards was forced to rally round their colours in order to defend them. Joining them was Peel, who fought with the guardsmen before leading them to safety and preventing them from being surrounded. For this act, His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge was ready to bear testimony.



Left: Statue of Sir William Peel VC by William Theed, currently on display at the Greenwich Maritime Museum, London



Peel picks up and throws a live Russian shell during the siege of Sevastopol, saving the lives of many



A panoramic painting of the siege of Sevastopol by Franz Roubaud, which hints at the horrors faced by Peel



“FOR VOLUNTEERING TO LEAD THE LADDER PARTY AT THE ASSAULT ON THE REDAN, AND CARRYING THE FIRST LADDER UNTIL WOUNDED”

VC Recommendation

Any hopes of the Russians defeating the allies on the field died with their failure at Inkerman, and the siege of Sevastopol would drag on for months. The harsh winter of 1854-55 took its toll on both sides, particularly the British, who lacked the necessary supplies for campaigning in winter. Nevertheless, the allies were determined to take Sevastopol, and a number of assaults on the port city were conducted over the coming months.

One such assault was carried out by the British on 18 June 1855. It was during this that Peel would make his third and final gallant act of the campaign for which he would be recommended for the Victoria Cross. A heavy bombardment of the city was conducted on 17 June, and the following day the French assaulted the Malakoff redoubt while the British similarly attacked the Great Redan bastion.

Peel joined in this latter assault, volunteering to lead the ladder party, a particularly dangerous task. With the attacks underway, the captain helped carry the first ladder but was wounded in the hail of Russian fire that greeted the attackers. The assault failed, but Peel, although he did not know it at the time, was to become one of the earliest recipients of the VC.

The Victoria Cross came into being in early 1856, months after Peel's last gallant act. Nevertheless, he was recommended for the award by Sir Stephen Lushington, the commanding officer of the Naval Brigade

during the Crimean War. Details of the recommendation were published in the *London Gazette* of 24 February 1857.

Following the end of the Crimean War, Peel was given command of the 50-gun steam frigate *Shannon*, setting sail for China in March 1856. Upon reaching Singapore, he received news that the Indian Mutiny had broken out, and shortly after was ordered to take his ship to Calcutta, where he would once again form a Naval Brigade for service ashore. On 14 August 1857 Peel left his ship at the head of 450 men, six 24-pounder guns and two eight-inch howitzers.

Throughout the Indian Mutiny, Peel displayed the same coolness and bravery that he had shown during the Crimean War. His Naval Brigade, which was later reinforced, gave efficient service, and both he and his men played an important part in the second relief of Lucknow in March 1858. However, he would again be wounded during this latter operation, when a musket ball entered his leg. The musket ball was later cut out from the opposite side of his limb.

Unable to fight on due to his wounds, Peel was sent to Cawnpore. From there, he was set to make the long journey back to England. However, on 20 April he contracted smallpox and died seven days later – he was only 33 years of age. Peel's VC and other medals are currently held at the National Maritime Museum in London, where a large marble statue of him is also on display.

Great Battles

| SIEGE OF |

KHE SANH

The North Vietnamese besieged an isolated outpost in northwestern South Vietnam held by the US Marines, but their attack failed in the face of overwhelming American firepower

QUANG TRI PROVINCE, SOUTH VIETNAM 21 JANUARY – 8 APRIL 1968

WORDS WILLIAM E. WELSH



North Vietnamese artillery and mortar shells exploded atop American-held Hill 64 slightly north of Khe Sanh Combat Base in the predawn darkness of 8 February 1968. Communist sappers shoved Bangalore torpedoes through the triple concertina wire on the outpost's perimeter and unrolled spools of canvas over the wire so that the assault troops could breach the perimeter. Khaki-uniformed troops armed with AK-47 assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and satchel charges streamed into the compound.

The 65 marines of Alpha Company of the First Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment reeled under the shock of the attack. Some of the marines fought from the protection of the trenches and bunkers, while others climbed out of the trenches and charged at the invaders to stop them from reaching the heavy weapons and bunkers. The marines fired M16 assault rifles and M60 machine guns, as well as M79

grenade launchers and one-shot disposable rocket launchers in an effort to check the enemy onslaught.

As the fighting grew in intensity, the shouts and screams of the combatants were drowned out by the roar of incoming artillery shells fired from American and North Vietnamese mortars and howitzers, as each side brought supporting fire to bear on the contested hill. After 90 minutes of fighting, the NVA had captured most of the compound, except for the trenches on the southern side of the stronghold. The

"JOHNSON REQUIRED THE MEMBERS OF THE JCS TO SIGN A PLEDGE THAT THEY WOULD NOT ALLOW KHE SANH COMBAT BASE TO FALL TO THE ENEMY"

Communists broke off their attack at dawn. A Marine Corps relief column backed by a section of M48 tanks arrived after daybreak to mop up any remaining resistance.

The fight for Hill 64 was typical of the savage, limited attacks that the NVA made against the Marine Corps units garrisoning Khe Sanh Combat Base and its outlying hills during the 77-day siege of the military installation, which began on 21 January 1968. 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the battle. During the course of the siege, General Vo Nguyen Giap orchestrated the movements of 34,000 soldiers in four divisions. Although Giap never resorted to using human-wave attacks like those that he had employed to defeat the French army at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, his forces did inflict substantial casualties on the US Marines through their relentless artillery and rocket bombardment and in sharp clashes like the one for Hill 64.

"I don't want any damn Dinbinfoo," US President Lyndon Johnson famously told the joint chiefs of staff in the run up to the

US Marine tank crews inside the perimeter of the combat base watch as jet aircraft make bombing runs against enemy positions

OPPOSING FORCES



**NORTH
VIETNAMESE
ARMY**

LEADER:

General Vo Nguyen Giap

INFANTRY: 34,000

HEAVY GUNS: 200

LIGHT TANKS: 16

**US & SOUTH
VIETNAMESE
ARMY**

LEADER:

Colonel David Lownds

INFANTRY: 6,000

HEAVY GUNS: 40

MEDIUM TANKS: 12

siege. To ensure there was no repeat of the French military disaster, Johnson required the members of the JCS to sign a pledge that they would not allow Khe Sanh Combat Base to fall to the enemy.

The North Vietnamese motive for the attack remains unclear to this day. On the one hand, Hanoi may have been seeking to tie down Marine Corps units and their supporting aircraft in advance of the Tet Offensive against South Vietnamese population centres, which began shortly after Khe Sanh was surrounded. On the other hand, North Vietnamese military leaders may have sought to try to capture Khe Sanh Combat Base in order to gain a great propaganda victory over the Americans.

Khe Sanh Combat Base was perched on a triangular-shaped plateau on the south side of the Rao Quan River in the northwestern corner of the Republic of South Vietnam. It was located 23 kilometres (14 miles) south of the Demilitarized Zone and ten kilometres (six miles) east of Laos.

The higher elevations of the picturesque hills of Khe Sanh are painted emerald green with double-canopy rainforest, while the lower elevations are a patchwork of green and brown with tall elephant grass. The Americans deemed control of the handful of hills northwest of the combat base essential to its overall defence, as enemy artillery placed on the hills would make the base indefensible.

The marines who garrisoned the combat base took a beating from the weather as well as the enemy. It rained all year round in the

“THE NORTH VIETNAMESE KNEW THAT THE YEAR-ROUND CLOUD AND FOG WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY HAMPER AMERICAN AIR SUPPLY AND AIR STRIKES”

region. What's more, a weather phenomenon known as the crachin occasionally caused thick opaque clouds to drift close to the ground in the mornings, thus limiting visibility to a kilometre (half a mile) or less. Thick fog enveloped the landscape at night and well into the morning as a result of the interaction between the cool air in higher elevations and warm air in lower elevations. The North Vietnamese knew that the year-round cloud and fog would significantly hamper American air supply and air strikes.

The only road into the combat base was National Route 9, an east-west corridor that the North Vietnamese cut in early January 1968. After that, the marines relied on resupply by helicopter and cargo aircraft such as the C-130 Hercules and C-123 Provider. The nearest US Marine installations were 19-24 kilometres (12-15 miles) east at the Rockpile and Camp Carroll, where 16 massive 175mm guns with the capability to fire beyond the horizon could bring additional fire to bear.



A Douglas A-4F Skyhawk from the US Navy launches zuni rockets during the siege

In 1962 the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN) built a primitive dirt airstrip three kilometres (two miles) north of the village of Khe Sanh, and the US Army Special Forces established a Civilian Irregular Defence Camp next to the airstrip on the ground that would later become the combat base. The special forces' primary responsibility was to monitor enemy movement south along the clandestine logistics corridor known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which funnelled men and supplies from North Vietnam through eastern Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam.

In 1966 a Navy Construction Battalion expanded the length of the airstrip and put down steel matting that would enable it to support the weight of cargo aircraft. The marines established a small garrison at Khe Sanh that year, largely at the behest of General William Westmoreland, who as commander of the US military forces in South Vietnam had authority over the Marine Corps forces stationed in the country. Westmoreland had

Spent artillery shells are piled in heaps. The US forces fired tens of thousands of rounds and proved crucial in repelling NVA assaults



his own motives for the build-up of equipment and troops at Khe Sanh. He saw it as a staging area for a possible strike into Laos to cut the trail, but US President Lyndon Johnson never approved the idea for fear that it might draw Communist China into the war.

Leaving the marines to guard the airstrip, the special forces relocated their camp to Lang Vei, ten kilometres (six miles) to the southwest. As marine operations increased in the Khe Sanh area, the NVA stepped up its activities in the locale as well. A Marine Corps patrol on 24 April 1967 collided with an enemy force approaching the base over the rough ground to the west. The rugged terrain, with its hills and ravines, offered good cover for the approaching North Vietnamese soldiers.

The marines sent two rifle battalions of the Third Marine Regiment to engage the enemy.

Over the course of the next 11 days, the two sides fought a series of skirmishes as the marines worked to clear the North Vietnamese from key hills northwest of the combat base. On 28 April the marines secured Hill 861, and on 5 May they captured Hill 881 North.

The NVA, as always, proved tenacious on the defence, and the Americans called in artillery fire and air strikes. Fighter-bombers of the First Marine Aircraft Wing flew 1,100 sorties and the big guns at the Rockpile and Camp Carroll fired 25,000 rounds. In addition, US Air Force B-52 Stratofortress bombers flew 23 strikes. The NVA, which like the US Marines removed their dead from the battlefield if possible, left behind 940 bodies, and the marines suffered 155 killed and 425 wounded in what became known afterwards as the Hill Fights.

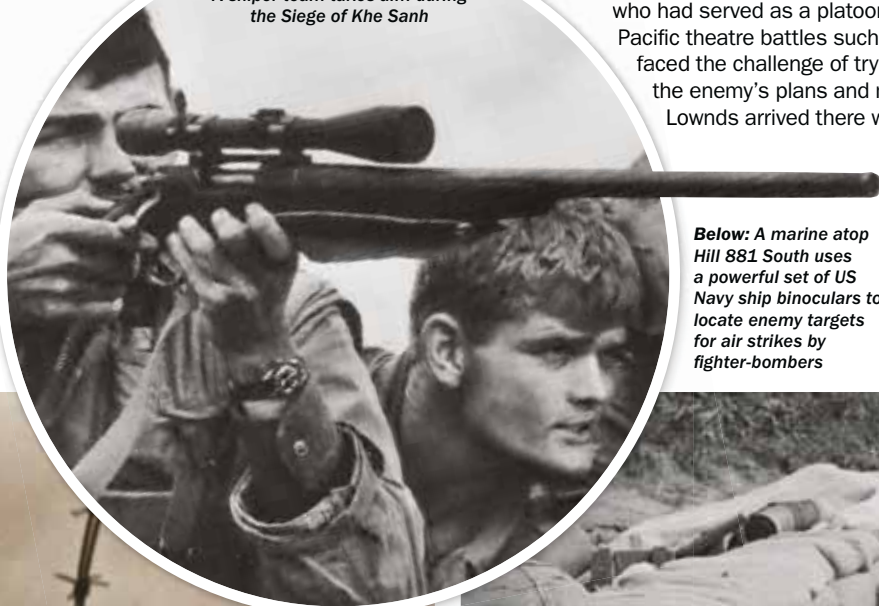
Colonel David Lownds, the cigar-chomping commander of 26th Marine Regiment, arrived to take charge of operations at Khe Sanh Combat Base on 12 August 1967. A World War II veteran who had served as a platoon commander in Pacific theatre battles such as Iwo Jima, Lownds faced the challenge of trying to anticipate the enemy's plans and movements. When Lownds arrived there was no imminent

threat of a large-scale attack, but that would change by the year's end. In the meantime, the Navy Seabees once again rebuilt the airstrip. Over the course of two months, beginning in August, they put a foundation of crushed rock under steel matting to deter erosion from monsoon rains. While the airstrip was closed, resupply of the combat base was conducted by parachute drops.

As it became increasingly evident from intelligence data that the NVA was planning a major attack against the combat base, Lownds ordered his marines to take preparations to safeguard themselves in the event of an attack. He also had combat engineers oversee work details that strengthened the perimeter defences. Lownds also fortified the weapons defences of the hilltop outposts.

To defend the combat base and hold key positions west and northwest of the base, Lownds had 5,000 men in the three battalions that constituted his 26th Marine Regiment. The First and Third Battalions of the 26th Regiment defended the base, while the Second Battalion of the 26th Regiment held Hill 558 – a position that would allow it to block enemy forces moving through the

A sniper team takes aim during the Siege of Khe Sanh



Below: A marine atop Hill 881 South uses a powerful set of US Navy ship binoculars to locate enemy targets for air strikes by fighter-bombers

“LOWNDS ISSUED AN ORDER IN MID-JANUARY REQUIRING THE MARINES AT KHE SANH TO WEAR THEIR FLAK JACKETS AND CARRY THEIR RIFLES WITH THEM WHEREVER THEY WENT”



Rao Quan Valley towards the combat base. The key hilltop outposts – Hill 881S, Hill 861 and 861A – were held by company-sized detachments. The rifle companies defending the hilltop outposts and the perimeter of the combat base routinely conducted patrols, but as the threat grew, platoon-sized patrols were restricted to within 460 metres (500 yards) of their perimeter to prevent costly ambushes.

Lownds issued an order in mid-January requiring the marines at Khe Sanh to wear their flak jackets and carry their rifles with them wherever they went, so that they would be ready for battle in the event of a surprise attack. He also directed each marine to build a foxhole next to the bunker where he slept, as well as near the location on base where he was assigned during the day.

The artillerymen who manned the six 155mm and 18 105mm howitzers defending the combat base worked throughout January to pre-register coordinates of likely targets outside the perimeter, in an effort to ensure that they could furnish quick and accurate supporting fire in the event of an attack on any number of different marine-held locations. In addition to the howitzers, Lownds also had a platoon of M48A3 Patton tanks, as well as two platoons of M50A1 Ontos vehicles, each of which was armed with six 106mm recoilless rifles. Lownds distributed a small number of single 106mm recoilless rifles and 4.2-inch heavy mortars to the hilltop outposts to supplement their 81mm mortars and .50 calibre machine guns.

Westmoreland instituted a comprehensive bombing operation known as Operation Niagara at the beginning of January. The first phase consisted of surveillance and reconnaissance through aerial photography and electronic ground sensors designed to pinpoint NVA forces for attack by air force, navy and marine strike aircraft. He planned a follow-on phase in which fighter-bombers and B-52s would make air strikes based on the intelligence gathered.

The marines caught a lucky break on 20 January when an NVA artillery officer deserted his unit. Eager to cooperate with the Americans, Lieutenant La Than Tonc informed the marines that a major attack would unfold the next day against the combat base and hills 861 and 881 South. This was part of an effort from the NVA to capture the high ground, he said. The North Vietnamese intended to deploy artillery and mortars on the captured hills in preparation for assaults on the base. Lownds immediately put his forces on high alert.

That night the North Vietnamese launched a battalion-sized attack against the 150 marines

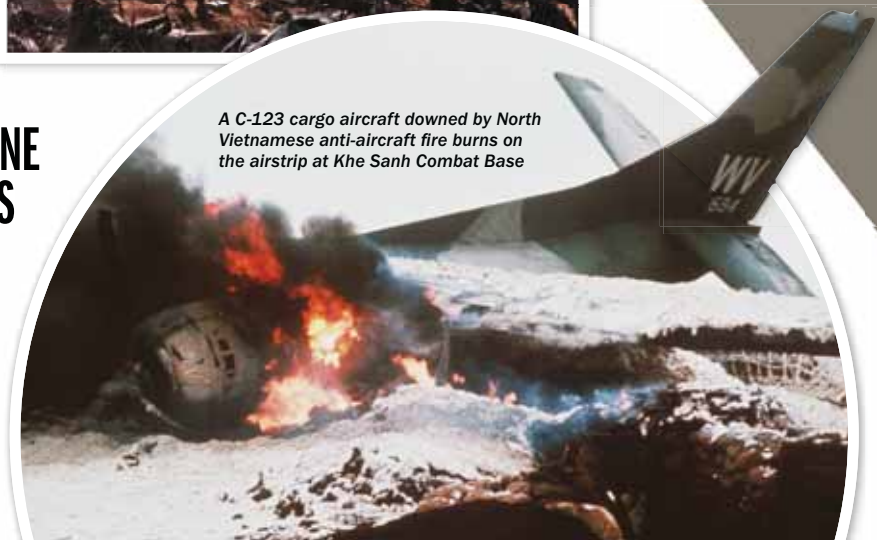
KHE SANH 1968



Below: Airborne troops destroying enemy bunkers after an assault on Hill 875



A C-123 cargo aircraft downed by North Vietnamese anti-aircraft fire burns on the airstrip at Khe Sanh Combat Base



“THE ATTACK BEGAN AT 12.30AM WITH THE NVA FIRING ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADES AND MACHINE GUNS TO SUPPORT ASSAULT TROOPS WHO LAID BAMBOO MATS AND LADDERS OVER THE CONCERTINA AND TANGLE-FOOT WIRE”

08 CAVALRY TO THE RESCUE

The US First Cavalry Division begins Operation Pegasus on 1 April with the goal of re-opening Route 9 to Khe Sanh Combat Base. The NVA lacks sufficient anti-aircraft guns to impede the Air Cavalry's offensive operations. A week later the Fifth Battalion, Seventh Cavalry links up with the First Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, ending the siege.

01 NORTH VIETNAMESE RECON

On the night of 2 January movement was detected outside the western perimeter of Khe Sanh Combat Base. A Marine rifle squad fired on a group of six men killing all but one who escaped. The dead men were North Vietnamese regimental officers disguised in Marine Corps uniforms.

07 FOOT PATROL AMBUSHED

A 48-man marine platoon from Bravo Company, 3/26 stumbles into a devastating ambush east of the combat base while looking for NVA trenches and tunnels. The survivors have to leave 25 fallen marines outside the perimeter until the NVA withdraws. On 30 March the bodies are recovered.

05 CRASH LANDING

A KC-130F transport aircraft was struck by enemy machine gun fire as it was inbound on 10 February. The pilot managed to safely land the aircraft, but it caught fire. Eight of the 11 crew members perished. The Air Force and Marines temporarily banned the large cargo plane in favour of using the smaller C-123.

03 LUCKY SHOT

The North Vietnamese launch a pre-dawn bombardment on 21 August against the combat base with many of its 200 heavy guns and 122mm rockets. One rocket scores a direct hit on the main ammunition dump located next to the airstrip, creating a massive explosion from 1,500 tons of bombs, shells and bullets. Secondary explosions occur for two days as the ordnance cooks off. The assault marks the beginning of the 77-day siege.

06 PROBING ATTACKS

With a massive artillery bombardment supporting their assault, on 21 February a battalion of North Vietnamese troops attacks the eastern end of the combat base where the South Vietnamese Rangers are stationed. The Communists, using their trenches to cover their movements, conduct frequent probing attacks from the east for the next three weeks.

04 ATTACK ON HILL 861A

NVA troops launch a pre-dawn attack on 6 February against a company of marines holding Hill 861A. The two sides engage in fierce fighting with assault rifles, grenades and bayonets. American long-range artillery from the Rockpile base 19 kilometres (12 miles) away fires 24-pound shells that help break up the attack.

02 AMERICANS SUFFER REPULSE

Three platoons of marines attack uphill on 20 January against NVA regulars entrenched on the top of Hill 861 North. After four hours of intense fighting in which the Americans fail to capture the knob, they return to their base on Hill 881 South.

Marines slept in bunkers beneath tall stacks of sandbags to protect them from daily bombardment by North Vietnamese mortars and artillery



of Kilo Company 3/26 manning Hill 861, three kilometres (two miles) northwest of the combat base. Throughout the evening the defenders had braced themselves for the attack. They could hear sappers working on the northwest portion of the perimeter to cut paths through the dense rows of triple concertina wire and tangle-foot wire – barbed wire laid horizontally in a checkerboard pattern just above the ground.

The attack began at 12.30am with the NVA firing rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns to support assault troops. They laid bamboo mats and ladders over the concertina and tangle-foot wire to breach the perimeter. The NVA overran First Platoon, which was defending that section of the perimeter. This allowed assault troops to hurl satchel charges into sandbagged positions housing 50-caliber machine guns and recoilless rifles.

“We’re being overrun!” First Lieutenant Jerry Saulsberry shouted over the battalion radio network at 2.00am. The Third Battalion’s command group was on Hill 881S with India Company of the 3/26 at the time. “A marine unit doesn’t get overrun,” replied Major Matthew Caulfield, the battalion operations officer. After learning that Kilo Company’s Captain Norman Jasper was severely wounded and that the company’s gunnery sergeant was dead, he instructed Saulsberry to hold on at all costs. In the meantime, Kilo Company’s artillery forward observer coordinated barrages from the heavy guns and blasted reinforcements being funnelled into the attack. At the same time the marines on Hill 881S began firing their mortars at the North Vietnamese attacking Hill 861 to the north. By 5.30am the NVA had withdrawn.

As the ground assault fizzled out, the NVA began shelling the combat base with their big guns and rocket launchers. They also conducted a minor probe against the combat base’s western perimeter and overran the village of Khe Sanh just south of the combat base. Helicopters extracted a small group of marines, who were at the village when the NVA attack began.

The ground attack on Hill 861 and bombardment of the combat base on 21 January marked the formal start of the siege. From that point on, US Air Force C-130 Hercules and C-123 Providers resupplied the combat base, and marine helicopters carried supplies to the hilltop positions. The NVA shelled the combat base on a daily basis during the siege, making a concentrated effort with its mortars to target the lumbering cargo aircraft. The daily shelling also routinely killed marines going about their business on the combat base. The constant shelling took a heavy psychological toll on the marines.

Lownds received two fresh battalions of infantry in the first week of the siege: the First

“MARINE ARTILLERYMEN FIRED 500 HIGH EXPLOSIVE ROUNDS INTO THE SUSPECTED STAGING AREA, SEEMINGLY CRIPPLING THE ATTACK FORCE”

The North Vietnamese launched failed ground attacks against Hills 861 and 861A early in the siege

HILL 861A

HILL 861

“THE GROUND ATTACK ON HILL 861 AND BOMBARDMENT OF THE COMBAT BASE ON 21 JANUARY MARKED THE FORMAL START OF THE SIEGE”

Battalion of the Ninth Marine Regiment and the elite ARNV 37th Ranger Battalion. Lownds ordered 1/9 to deploy outside the combat base's western perimeter facing Khe Sanh village, and he instructed the rangers to deploy on the south side of the combat base to provide an extra layer of defence from that direction. In this way, the combat base was buffered on three sides. There was no need to buffer the base on the north side because it bordered the Rao Quan gorge. In addition, Westmoreland unleashed the second phase of Operation Niagara. As part of the operation, B-52s flying from Guam pummelled NVA troop concentrations and staging areas around the clock.

When the Tet Offensive began on 29 January a lull occurred in the intensity of the NVA's ground operations at Khe Sanh, but US tactical and strategic air strikes continued unabated against enemy ground forces in the area. When electronic sensors indicated the North Vietnamese were massing to attack Hill 881S on 2 February, artillerymen fired 500 high-explosive rounds into the suspected staging area, seemingly crippling the attack force.

As part of its plan to tighten the noose on the combat base, the NVA unleashed a fierce assault on the Lang Vei Special Forces camp on 7 February, which marked the first time communist troops used tanks in South Vietnam. At 12.30am three columns of NVA troops, spearheaded by a total of 11 PT-76 light tanks, smashed through the concertina wire protecting the perimeter. Defending the camp were 24 Green Berets and several hundred mountain tribesmen serving as irregular infantry.

The tanks rumbled through the camp firing at point-blank range at sandbagged bunkers and heavy and automatic weapon positions. The din was tremendous as small arms and automatic weapons chattered, mortars popped, rocket-propelled and hand-thrown grenades exploded and tank cannons roared. Green tracer rounds from NVA machine guns sliced eerily through the blackness. The defenders had two 106mm recoilless rifles and 100 one-shot M72 light anti-tank weapons. The Green Berets knocked out a total of seven tanks during the six-hour battle.

NVA sappers tried desperately to force those manning the camp's underground concrete command centre to surrender. They tried satchel charges, flamethrowers and thermite and tear gas grenades but still could not compel the several dozen individuals to give up. Lownds refused to send a relief column for fear that the column would

be ambushed. The NVA withdrew at daylight, and the survivors abandoned the camp later that day for the safety of the combat base.

In March the NVA began slowly withdrawing units to the safety of Laos. By early April the Siege of Khe Sanh was over. The Americans had suffered 199 killed and 830 wounded over the course of the siege. In addition they had flown 24,000 ground attack strikes and 2,700 B-52 sorties, inflicting staggering casualties. Although exact North Vietnamese casualties are unknown, estimates place their losses at around 10,000 men.

For their part, the North Vietnamese compelled the US Marine Corps to strip men and equipment from the heavily populated South Vietnamese coast, leaving major cities and towns vulnerable to Communist attacks carried out as part of the countrywide Tet Offensive. The Americans technically won the siege by retaining control of the battlefield, but it was a pyrrhic victory that was overshadowed by the Communist success in the Tet Offensive, which revealed that the North Vietnamese could strike at will anywhere they pleased in South Vietnam.

FURTHER READING

- ★ JONES, GREGG. *LAST STAND AT KHE SANH: THE U.S. MARINES' FINEST HOUR IN VIETNAM* (BOSTON: DA CAPO, 2014)
- ★ PISOR, ROBERT. *THE END OF THE LINE: THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH* (NEW YORK: NORTON, 1982)
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Left: A 105mm howitzer fires on enemy positions. US air and artillery strikes inflicted significant casualties on the North Vietnamese

An RAF CH-47 practises a limited visibility landing known as a brownout. This type of landing can make large blinding dust clouds, stirred up by the helicopter's downwash, causing significant flight safety risks from aircraft and ground obstacle collisions

H-47 CHINOOK

WORDS & IMAGES RICH PITTMAN

The ultimate heavy-lift tandem-rotor helicopter, the Chinook delivers military support, a powerful assault capability and can even act as a flying hospital, providing aid to those in need

Initially designed and built by Boeing Vertol in the early 1960s, the CH-47 Chinook is now manufactured by Boeing Rotorcraft Systems at their recently modernised Ridley Park facility near Philadelphia. The CH-47A first entered service with the United States Army on 16 August 1962. Due to the outbreak of the Vietnam War in 1965, the Chinook entered into a baptism of fire on the front line and was heavily utilised, providing a heavy-lift capability. For a short time it also operated as a gunship.

The lack of a tail rotor permits nearly 100 per cent power to be used for lift, making it ideal for aircraft recovery missions, salvaging many damaged airframes. This recovery effort returned thousands of aircraft to service through regeneration programs and saved the USA billions of dollars. In total 349 CH-47As were built, but many of these suffered damage and 79 were lost during Vietnam.

The need for higher performance saw the CH-47B/C quickly designed and introduced.

The CH-47B had Allied Signal Engines T55-L7C – rated at 2850shp (2,130kW) – installed, and improvements to the fuselage were also introduced. The C model had larger capacity fuel tanks and an uprated transmission system. CH-47A/B/C models all served in Vietnam between 1965 and 1973. By the 1970s, the Chinook received global interest and worldwide sales started.

After the Vietnam War, Boeing and the US Army began planning a major fleet upgrade that led to

development of the CH-47D. The first prototype flew on 14 May 1979 and the first production aircraft flew on 26 February 1982. 441 early model Chinooks went through an extensive modernisation process in Philadelphia that produced an essentially new CH-47 fleet. CH-47D deliveries to the US Army took place until the mid-1990s.

The D model had a more powerful Honeywell L-712 engine that could handle a 25,000-pound useful load – nearly twice the Chinook's original lift capacity. These engines were upgraded again to the L-714A variant. The CH-47D was heavily involved in United States Army combat operations in the Gulf War, Bosnia, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Several rolling modernisation programs continue to ensure this multi-mission aircraft remains in service through to the 2030s and beyond. With the number of variations, Boeing has more recently marketed the Chinook as the H-47. Modern versions of the H-47 have been

“THE LACK OF A TAIL ROTOR PERMITS NEARLY 100 PER CENT POWER TO BE USED FOR LIFT, MAKING IT IDEAL FOR AIRCRAFT RECOVERY MISSIONS”

CH-47F TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

FUSELAGE 15.46M (50FT, 9IN)
HEIGHT 5.68M (18FT, 7.8IN)
FUSELAGE WIDTH 3.78M (12FT, 5IN)
FUEL CAPACITY 3914 LITRES (1034 GALLONS)
MAXIMUM SPEED 302KM/H (170 KTAS)
MISSION RADIUS 200NM (370.4KM)
SERVICE CEILING 6,096M (20,000FT)
MAX GROSS WEIGHT 22,680KG (50,000LBS)
CREW 2 PILOTS, 2 LOADMASTERS/CREWMEN

built under license in Italy (ICH-47F) and Japan (CH-47JA+) in addition to the CH-47F/MH-47G that are produced in the United States. Boeing already has plans for a CH-47F Block II that will feature a series of upgrades focused on increasing payload, providing commonality across the fleet and creating a foundation for affordable future upgrades. A swept tip, composite advanced rotor blade has already been developed, providing an estimated 1,500-pound increase in payload.

Since the Chinook's introduction over 50 years ago more than 1,200 vehicles have been delivered to 18 operators, with over 800 aircraft still in operation today. The CH-47's workhorse reputation has made it a desirable option worldwide. In addition to the US Army's substantial fleet, many countries have chosen a number of CH-47 to meet their heavy-lift needs.

OVER 300 CH-47F
 HAVE BEEN
 DELIVERED TO THE US
 ARMY SINCE 2006



An RAF pilot and co-pilot navigate their CH-47 over Wales

A Royal Air Force crew demonstrates considerable teamwork in balancing over 16 tons of Chinook on a concrete block during a handling exercise



“THE CHINOOK BECAME THE DEFINING IMAGE OF THE UK COMMITMENT IN AFGHANISTAN”



UNITED KINGDOM SERVICE

The UK's final decision to purchase CH-47s didn't come until 1978. Just over ten years earlier, in March 1967, an order was placed to replace the Bristol Belvedere, but the UK decided to cancel the contract just six months later due to extensive lobbying from UK manufacturers. The initial 33 Chinook HC-1s, based on the CH-47C version with some elements of the Canadian version, entered service in late 1980 at RAF Odiham, just in time to be used in action during the Falklands War in 1982.

Four Chinooks were sent on the British merchant ship SS Atlantic Conveyor. However, three were lost when the ship was hit by an Exocet air-to-surface missile on 25 May 1982. Luckily CH-47 ZA718 'Bravo November' was away from the ship at the time of the attack, resupplying British ships. Bravo November continued in the war as the sole available heavy lift-helicopter, surviving a night time inadvertent ditching (during which the co-pilot got as far as jettisoning his door to escape before the aircraft lifted clear) and flying way in defiance of routine maintenance protocols.

During the Falklands War, the British Army captured an Argentine CH-47 (using the door to stop BN's co-pilot getting cold) and this was brought back to the UK to be used as a training device and eventually donating its rear fuselage to repair Chinook ZA704 following a night dust landing accident in Oman.

In addition to the Falklands campaign, RAF Chinooks have also seen extensive service, including peace-keeping commitments in the Balkans, counter-terrorism in Northern Ireland and action in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. While deployed during the Afghanistan conflict the RAF CH-47 became a valuable asset, becoming well known for its emergency response role, in which the rear of the aircraft

RAF Chinook ZD574 flies the Mach (Machynlleth) loop in Wales. The Mach loop is a series of mountain valleys where pilots can hone their low-level tactical flying skills



became an emergency operating theatre. In many ways, as the UH-1 'Huey' came to symbolise the US war in Vietnam, the Chinook became the defining image of the UK's commitment in Afghanistan.

RAF Chinooks have received extensive upgrades over their operational life and have also received dozens of capability upgrades during operations thanks to the Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) process. Many of these fits are short term, others remain sensitive. Some persist on the aircraft and are fitted fleet-wide.

A pair of RAF CH-47 fitted with the Titan 385ES-HD Multi-Sensor Turret System operate on the vast Salisbury Plain Training Area in the UK. The Titan 385ES-HD Multi-Sensor Turret System combines high performance sensors into a single Line Replaceable Unit (LRU) solution, to meet the operational demands of today's airborne observation, surveillance and reconnaissance requirements



SPANISH SERVICE

The Spanish army became the first European force to choose the CH-47C (HT-17) after other heavy-lift helicopters, such as the CH-53 Sea Stallion, CH-46 Sea Knight, SA321 Super Frelon (France) and MI-6 Hook (Soviet Union/Russia) had all been considered.

A new battalion named BHELTRA V was formed at Colmenar Viejo airbase, situated northwest of Madrid. Spanish army service commenced during 1974/75.

BHELTRA V's motto is "Detras de Nadie" (behind no one) and the CH-47 operates many mission profiles, providing troop transport and moving heavy armament/equipment when tasked with supporting roles. The Spanish army CH-47 can also lift up to 10.5 tons of weight using the under-slung load capability and support special forces insertion/extraction, combat search and rescue and humanitarian tasking when requested.

Spain bought 13 CH-47Cs and designated them as HT-17s. Nine were updated to D standards and an additional six new aircraft were purchased.

Several upgrade packages have taken place since 1989, with systems installed including the Extended Range Fuel System II. This system not only allows the CH-47 to increase its flying range, it also enables the aircraft to refuel other aircraft or vehicles on the ground at a forward refuel point using the 'Fat Cow Procedure'. VHF/FM secure radio communication with PR4G radio has



Every 23 June, the Spanish army celebrates its foundation. A formal ceremony is held with a large flypast of army helicopters to finish the event. CH-47s (H-17) from BHELTRA V form a large part of the flypast

been introduced and Iridium phone has been integrated into the satellite communications system. Improved ballistic protection against 7.62mm rounds has been added. Honeywell T55-714 turbine engines with FADEC system, and a helicopter engine inlet protection with an engine air particle separator (EAPS) upgrade have also been introduced. Spain plans to upgrade the CH-47D to the F model in 2019.



Spain's rugged and mountainous terrain allows the Spanish BHELTRA V crews to train in many different scenarios. A ski-fitted CH-47 practises snow landings in the Sierra de Guadarrama mountain range

Right: The loadmaster/crewman conducts many tasks in the back cabin during a flight. As well as providing visual assistance to the pilots on the Intercom, they make sure cargo and passengers are loaded safely and efficiently



"BHELTRA V'S MOTTO IS 'DETRAS DE NADIE' (BEHIND NO ONE) AND THE CH-47 OPERATES MANY MISSION PROFILES"



A night view of a US Army CH-47



A US Army CH-47 in Botswana. CH-47s have been used extensively in multiple theatres and conditions

Single rotor helicopters require a torque regulating vertical rotor, such as a tail rotor, to counteract the yawing movement produced by the single large rotor. The Chinook's counter-rotating tandem rotors eliminate this requirement, releasing most of the power for lift and thrust and avoiding other tail rotor issues. A small percentage of power is lost due to the transmission complexity and the overlapping rotors

**“QUICKER PILOT
DECISIONS AND MORE
ACCURATE HANDLING
CAN BE ACHIEVED”**

ADVANCES IN DESIGN

The most recent high-production variant of Chinook is the CH-47F. Equipped with a redesigned modernised airframe, Common Avionics Architecture System (CAAS) cockpit that improves crew situational awareness and the Digital Automatic Flight Control System (DAFCS), which offers enhanced flight-control capabilities for the multitude of conditions in which the helicopter is used, quicker pilot decisions and more accurate handling can be achieved. A reconfigured cabin can be customised with troop seats, litters or auxiliary fuel for any mission. Triple cargo hooks and a broad centre of gravity range make for flexible load lifting. Mounts for fast roping, skis, rescue hoist and three gun positions make the latest CH-47Fs highly versatile.

A crewman, who is responsible for efficient and safe loading and unloading, looks out from the rear cabin



A CH-47 deploys flares, one part of a range of defensive equipment designed to protect the crew and passengers



SELF-PROTECTION

The CH-47F can be equipped with up to three M240 7.62mm machine guns, with one positioned on the loading ramp and two at the side windows.

The M240B is a general-purpose machine gun. It can be mounted on a bipod, tripod, aircraft or vehicle. The M240B is a belt-fed, air-cooled, gas-operated, fully automatic machine gun that fires from an open bolt position. This reliable 7.62mm machine gun delivers more energy to the

target than the smaller calibre M-249 SAW. Many operators, such as the US 160th SOAR and the RAF, elect to boost defensive firepower further by fitting the six-barreled Dillon Aero M134 Minigun at the port and starboard doors.

Most users have also equipped their aircraft with comprehensive Defensive Aids Suites featuring Radar Warning Receivers, Missile Warning Systems, IR countermeasures and chaff/flare dispensers, as well as ballistic protection for the crew and passengers.

ENGINE

The Honeywell T55 family of military turboshaft engines began life, as its designation indicates, in 1955. To date, more than 6,000 T55 engines have been produced, logging some 12 million hours of operation on the Boeing CH-47 Chinook and MH-47 helicopters.

At its introduction, the T55 produced 1,600 shaft horsepower (SHP). Several decades and generations of development later, today's T55 produces 4,800 SHP and powers the CH-47 Chinook to a maximum speed of 170 knots (196 miles per hour). With proven power, reliability and durability, the latest configuration 55-L-714A delivers 22 per cent more power and uses seven per cent less fuel than its predecessor.



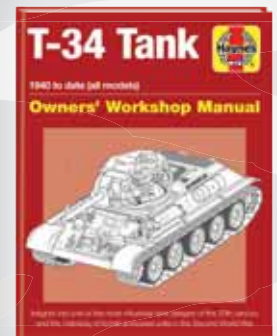
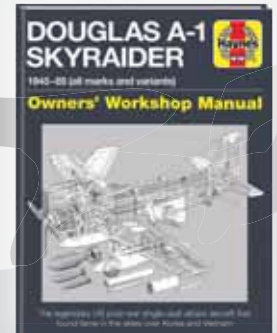
Above: A T55 turboshaft engine on a Japanese Air Self-Defense Force CH-47

Below: A Honeywell T55-K-712 turboshaft engine at Kawasaki Air Base, Japan

"TODAY'S T55
PRODUCES 4,800 SHP
AND POWERS THE
CH-47 CHINOOK TO A
MAXIMUM SPEED OF
170 KNOTS"



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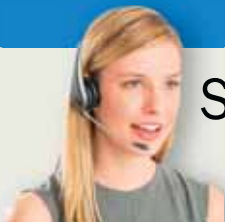
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REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films

DARKEST
HOURChurchill, superbly
played by Gary
Oldman, rallies the
House of Commons

Starring: Gary Oldman, Lily James, Kristen Scott Thomas, Ben Mendelsohn **Director:** Joe Wright
Released: Out now **Certificate:** PG

GARY OLDMAN PUTS IN A BARNSTORMING
PERFORMANCE AS WINSTON CHURCHILL

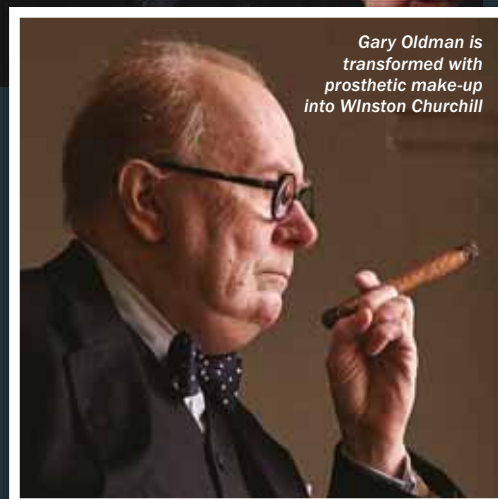
Director Joe Wright and screenwriter Anthony McCarten made a smart play, turning the early days of Winston Churchill's first premiership into a Frank Capra-style yarn. Like Jimmy Stewart's folksy Mr. Smith in Washington, the newly appointed prime minister is a man on a mission, but there are rival politicians conspiring against him. Taking a populist approach, trading in what Wright has described as "emotional truths", artistic licence pays off royally with Gary Oldman positively shining in what is a virtuosic, barnstorming performance.

Whereas Jonathan Teplitzky's *Churchill*, released in the summer of 2017, focused on the days leading up to Operation Overlord, painting the prime minister as a saturnine grouch obsessed with wanting a place at the big boys' table (he constantly gets on General Eisenhower's nerves), *Darkest Hour* unfolds in May 1940 with Churchill having to deal with Tory Party squabbling and in-fighting – Lord Halifax's scheme to 'powwow' with Hitler via Italian intermediaries, King George's

inherent distrust and the nightmare taking place on the beaches at Dunkirk. In this morass of dilemmas, the famed bulldog spirit slowly emerges. The man who told the enemy that Britain would fight them on the beaches, in the fields, in the streets to the last person standing, was also riddled with crippling doubts and black moods, but ultimately realised Britain could not surrender. His inner journey makes for stirring stuff, regardless of politics.

Wright is known for his directorial panache, and he does much to cleverly enliven a movie almost exclusively taking place in the war rooms, on the Commons floor and in swish Whitehall apartments. Churchill's introduction, for example, is one of the film's most beautiful shots. Hired as a typist, Elizabeth Layton (Lily James) enters a darkened bedroom. In the gloom is a shadowy, bulky outline sat upright in bed. Then, a deep orange light flickers alive from a pre-breakfast 'stogie' and Churchill's murky profile is suddenly illuminated. As introductions go, it's a corker.

Another highlight is a sequence on a French battlefield, with bombs dropping and exploding from planes high up in the air. As the camera – in God's eye view – pans across a ruined wasteland caused by the hellfire and devastation of Luftwaffe bombs, the landscape dissolves into a map of a dead soldier's face, craters are transformed into flecks of dirt, the searing orange of an explosion a twinkling in his eye.

Gary Oldman is
transformed with
prosthetic make-up
into Winston Churchill

Winston is presented as an irascible toff with the common touch and Oldman, sporting prosthetic jowls, nose and fat suit, chews the dialogue, the scenery and the cigar almost permanently clenched in his mouth with actorly relish. Nothing is heavy-handed, though, and the film is often funny (a phone conversation with President Roosevelt discussing transportation of newly acquired aircraft by horse to the Canadian border is delightfully absurd).

Darkest Hour is Joe Wright's movie portrait of a complex but important man: one who knows he can be disagreeable and a bit of a loose cannon but is ultimately bang on the money about non-capitulation to the evil Third Reich.

FLASHPOINT TRIESTE

Author: Christian Jennings **Publisher:** Osprey **Price:** £20

THE FIRST FLASHPOINT OF THE COLD WAR BETWEEN EAST AND WEST IS EXPLORED

Trieste has always held a strategically important position, with its crucial deep-water port forming an outlet into the Adriatic Sea from landlocked Austria, Hungary and southern Germany. The city is the gateway to the Balkans from the north and, above all, southeastern and south-central Europe. Its hinterland stretches from Bavaria and the former Czechoslovakia to upper Silesia and western Galicia in Poland. In short, in 1945 it meant far more to the world than it did to Italy or Yugoslavia.

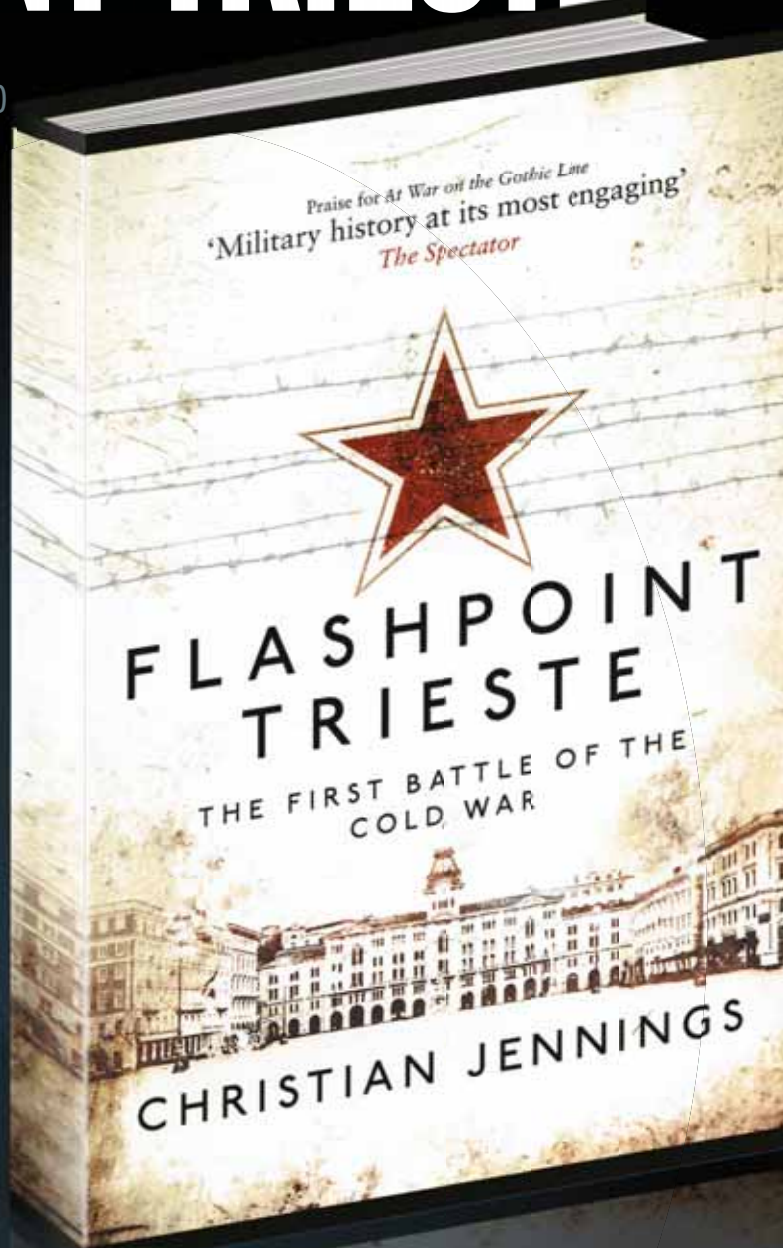
When World War II ended, the fear uppermost in the minds of the British and Americans was that if Trieste fell into the hands of Yugoslavia, it would by default go to the Soviet Union. That in turn would bring about a radical shift in the balance of power in Europe, to the benefit of the Eastern powers. The Western Allies were therefore adamant that Trieste be kept in friendly hands to avoid it drifting into the Russian orbit.

This is the backdrop to the tale of high intrigue and power politics, "the first battle of the Cold War", as the subtitle states, brought to light in the lively and well-documented narrative of Christian Jennings. The author is a seasoned foreign correspondent who has been based in key spots in this region and now lives in Italy. He brings an impeccable set of credentials to the true story of what reads like a Cold War thriller.

The drama opens in mid-April 1945, when the Red Army had taken Vienna and Budapest and was fighting outside Berlin. "Yugoslavia was under the control of Marshal Josip Broz Tito and his communist partisans," Jennings said. "If these proxy allies could annex parts of Austria and northeastern Italy, including the key port of Trieste, Stalin could command the Adriatic. He would establish a stranglehold on access from Central Europe to vital Mediterranean shipping lanes leading to Egypt, Greece, the Suez Canal and India."

In mid-April Tito came out and boldly announced Yugoslavia's claims to Trieste. The fact that his statement was made on a visit to Moscow was taken as a clear indication of at least tacit Soviet support. The Italian government had advocated a compromise that would leave Trieste in Italy. This at the time was regarded as the single most important problem of Italy's foreign affairs. With the exception of the Communists and, to a lesser extent the Socialists, all Italian political parties were vehement in their support of the government's claims to Trieste.

By May, Tito's Partisans had occupied Trieste. 24 hours later, the British Eighth Army announced that the town had been captured by New Zealand units. The Partisans released a menacing communiqué of their own, warning that the entry of Allied units into Trieste could have "unwished-for consequences". The first salvo of the Cold War had been fired. The political events and outcome of this story are brought to life through the lives and actions of 12 men and women from seven countries, thrown together on a strategically vital frontier between East and West.



"IN MID-APRIL, TITO CAME OUT AND BOLDLY ANNOUNCED YUGOSLAVIA'S CLAIMS TO TRIESTE. THE FACT THAT HIS STATEMENT WAS MADE ON A VISIT TO MOSCOW WAS TAKEN AS A CLEAR INDICATION OF AT LEAST TACIT SOVIET SUPPORT"

A US Navy ship sits in port at Trieste, in one of the most contentious and strategically important sites in world politics at the time

LED BY LIONS

MPS AND SONS WHO FELL IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Author: Neil Thornton Publisher: Fonthill Media Price: £25 (Hardback)

NEIL THORNTON REVEALS HOW THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS WAS NOT IMMUNE FROM THE TRAGEDY OF 1914-18 IN THIS WELL-RESEARCHED AND POIGNANT BOOK

The phrase "lions led by donkeys" is popularly used to describe the brave fighting spirit of ordinary British soldiers during World War I who were let down by incompetent commanders. Although variants of the phrase pre-date the Great War, its current widespread use is widely attributed to Alan Clark's revisionist history *The Donkeys*. Clark later became a high-profile MP and *Led by Lions* is an apt title for Neil Thornton's new work about MPs and their sons who died during the war.

With a foreword by John Bercow, Speaker of the House of Commons, and a preface by Ian R.K. Paisley MP, *Led by Lions* dispels the popular belief that Britain's politicians stayed at home while hundreds of thousands of men died on the battlefield. In fact, almost one third of sitting MPs of all political parties, including Irish nationalists, saw active

service. 22 of these parliamentarians would lose their lives either in combat or from illness, including William G.C. Gladstone, the grandson of the former Liberal prime minister, and Valentine Fleming, who was the father of Ian Fleming, the creator of 'James Bond'. The casualty rate among MPs' sons was even worse, with their fatalities including the eldest son of the then serving premier H H. Asquith, and two sons of Chancellor of the Exchequer Andrew Bonar Law.

Every MP and member's son that died during the war is given an individual biography, and the result is a moving resurrection of men who were previously forgotten. Thornton's research and vast use of primary resources is to be highly commended because each soldier's life is recorded in great detail.

Although the mass tragedy of World War I is well known, *Led by Lions* leaves the reader with a heightened sense of the 'lost generation'. The vast majority of the MPs who served during the war came from wealthy, privileged backgrounds, but they were nevertheless extremely courageous and dedicated men. Time and again through every biography each MP or son was determined to lead from the front, prove themselves to their men and in many cases die for them. This included Thomas Agar-Robartes, who was killed and recommended for the Victoria Cross for rescuing wounded men under heavy fire. In turn, the men idolised their officers, and survivors would often uphold their memory for the rest of their lives.

The MPs also emerge as human beings who could sometimes be riddled with doubt. Valentine Fleming was disillusioned with politics and William G.C. Gladstone was a modest man who believed that he wasn't cut out to be a soldier. However, all the MPs were bound by an unshakeable sense of duty both on and off the battlefield, and there are frequent examples of them apologising to their constituents for their enforced absence.

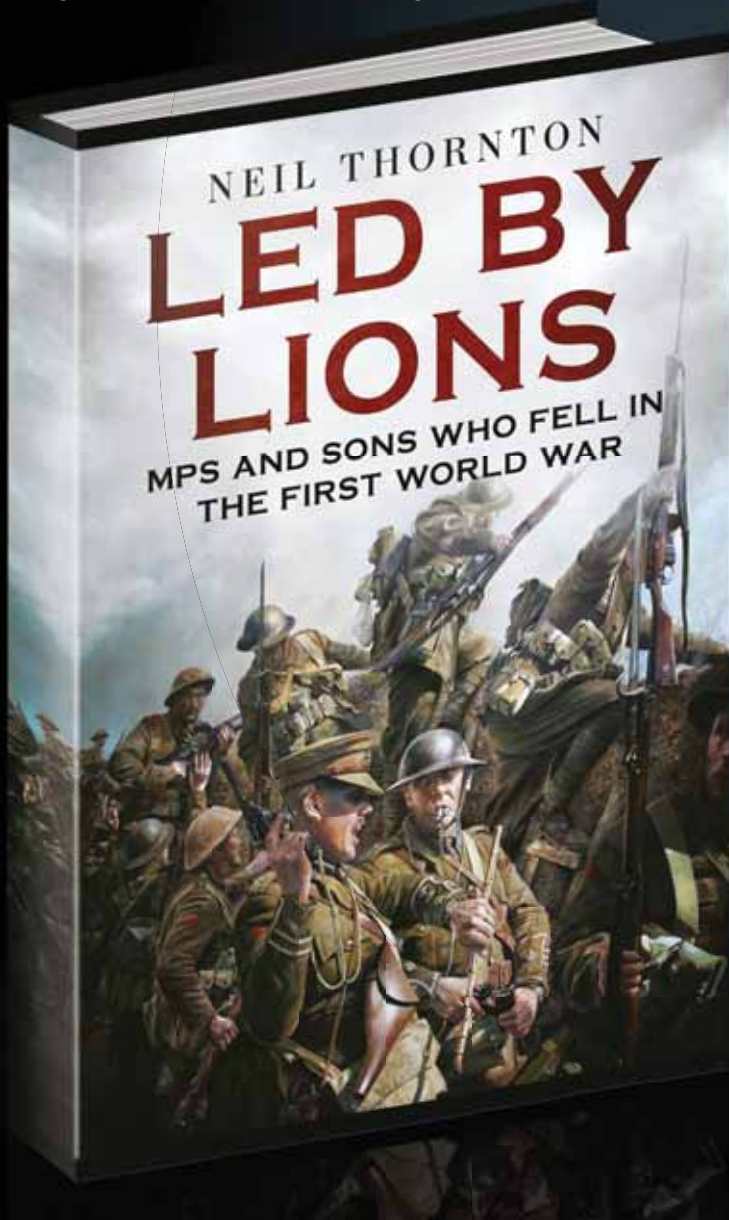
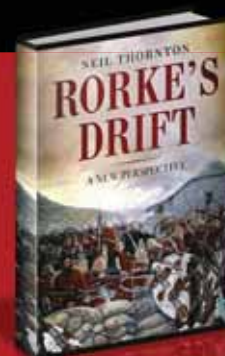
While there has always been courage, the selfless bravery shown by the fallen officers of World War I speaks of another age where duty and chivalric gallantry went hand in hand. In recent years the reputation of British politicians has arguably never been lower and many sitting MPs would do well to read this enlightening book and learn from their valiant predecessors' example.

"TIME AND AGAIN THROUGH EVERY BIOGRAPHY EACH MP OR SON WAS DETERMINED TO LEAD FROM THE FRONT, PROVE THEMSELVES TO THEIR MEN AND IN MANY CASES DIE FOR THEM"

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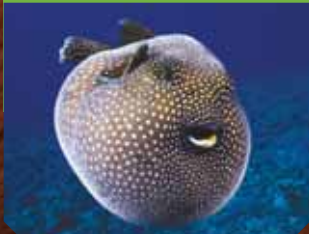
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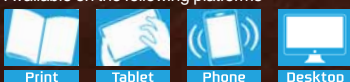


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POLITICISING THE POPPY

It has come to define national remembrance and commemoration, but does the poppy carry too much controversial baggage for the 21st century? Robin Horsfall argues that the true meaning of this enduring symbol is at risk of being distorted, or forgotten altogether

The first 'Poppy Appeal' was carried out by the British Legion in November 1921 and raised over £106,000 to help World War I veterans with employment and housing. In 1922 Major George Howson set up the Poppy Factory in order to employ disabled ex-servicemen.

The red poppy is a symbol of Remembrance, a badge worn by all on 11 November to commemorate Armistice Day – the end of World War I. The red poppy carries a message of great sadness and loss and reminds us all of the evils of war.

Those civilians and servicemen who believe that the red poppy in some way glorifies war and those who took part in wars have misunderstood the message. I would argue that Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae's lament asks the poppies to remember the dead – a cry from beneath the soil for those still living to remember.

In recent years many political groups and institutions have attempted to use the powerful emotional symbolism of the poppy to draw attention to their own beliefs or desires. They have tried to destroy or divide the unity of Remembrance Day by corrupting the message. Servicemen offended by these moves have in turn resorted to angry and aggressive responses. Some have berated and intimidated public figures and television presenters for not wearing a poppy. Sportsmen are compelled by public pressure to wear them on their sports gear. All these people miss the point because they attempt to force their beliefs onto others. They misrepresent the intended message and claim ownership of the red poppy for their own special beliefs. As a particularly difficult character I would refuse to wear any poppy if someone attempted to coerce me.

The Peace Pledge Union claims there are supposed to be three elements to the meaning of white poppies and say, "They represent remembrance for all victims of war, a commitment to peace and a challenge

to attempts to glamorise or celebrate war." This statement implies that this message is in some way different to the original. The wearers of a white poppy are in effect only supporting the original message. Some might argue, however, that they choose to place themselves on a superior level of morality. Peace pledgers might make the same claim against war veterans.

A white poppy, the shamrock poppy, even a regimental poppy all miss the point. There are no divisions between the dead. They are all laid in the soil, sometimes together in regimental graves but often in mass graves where their nation, rank and religion are unknown: all one in death, all one in the soil with only the red poppy to mark the continuity of life. Those who want to apply the poppy only to soldiers and associate themselves with acts of heroism or glory could also be accused of creating division.

The red poppy is not just about soldiers. The poppy doesn't identify a nation, a religion, a social rank, a conscientious objector, a coward or a gender. The red poppy only asks us to remember those who died because of war. This includes children who were sat in a school when a bomb hit or those who died of starvation and disease.

Poets speak of "the sacrifice of heroes who laid down their lives". Those of us who truly experienced war know that soldiers do not lay down their lives, nor do they sacrifice their lives – they lose them.

Wars are started by national leaders but they are fought by soldiers and suffered by everyone else. The soldier's maxim is "There are old soldiers and bold soldiers but there are no old bold soldiers." The men who served in the latter years of the two world wars were almost all conscripts. They went because they had to.

For myself there is only one symbolic poppy – the all-encompassing red poppy whose message is, "Remember the dead, remember the fallen, remember the horror and the loss and try – try very hard not to do it again."

Robin Horsfall served in Second Battalion The Parachute Regiment and the SAS for ten years, before working in security roles around the world. Today he is an inspirational after-dinner speaker and writer. His book *The Words of the Wise Old Paratrooper* is available on Kindle

**“SOLDIERS DO NOT LAY DOWN THEIR LIVES,
NOR DO THEY SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES
– THEY LOSE THEM”**



**“THE MEN WHO FOUGHT AND
DIED IN THESE OPERATIONS
WERE HIGHLY TRAINED,
IMMENSELY BRAVE AND UP
UNTIL RECENTLY HAVE LARGELY
GONE UNRECOGNISED”**

*A memorial to Sir David
Stirling, who founded the SAS.
Montgomery reportedly said
of him: “The boy Stirling is
quite mad, quite, quite mad.
However, in a war there is
often a place for mad people.”*



ROLL OF HONOUR

This quality collection meticulously records the stories of every fallen member of the SAS and LRDG, 1941-47, including never-before identified casualties

The Special Air Service and Long Range Desert Group conducted daring, clandestine operations behind enemy lines in the desert of North Africa, the Mediterranean, occupied France and beyond. The men who fought and died in these operations were highly trained, immensely brave and up until recently have largely gone unrecognised. Now, this new book collection recounts the incredible stories of 374 special forces casualties, who are commemorated in sites across 17 countries.

The book's author, writing anonymously under the pseudonym Ex-Lance-Corporal X, served in the British Army for 12 years and is the holder of the Queen's Gallantry Medal (QGM). For security reasons he cannot be named. He spent 13 years researching and compiling the book's service records, medal citations and operational reports. 100 per cent of profits from the book's run is being donated to charity, with £100,000 going to Combat Stress and the remainder funding small memorials to those shot after capture. **History of War** has a copy of *The SAS & LRDG Roll of Honour 1941-47* to give away to one lucky winner, so simply visit www.historyanswers.co.uk to enter. It is a limited print run of box sets and they are only available from www.sas-lrdg-roh.com. Below, the author explains more about the book and his work putting it together.

HoW: The preface to the book details the execution of SAS men by SS troops. Why did you choose to open the book with this scene?
Ex-Lance-Corporal X:

I'd already been working on the *Roll of Honour* for a couple of years when I discovered those lines. They detail the last moments of eight members of second SAS who had been captured in eastern France in September 1944 while operating behind the lines. Handed over to the SD, the men had been interrogated roughly then driven to a remote, wooded spot where they were shot one by one in the manner described. Undoubtedly they were afraid but refused to show it. The last simply turned to his murderer and said, "We were good men". Here was bravery that clearly deserved full, contextual recognition, and these four words inspired me to find and record everything I could about this group of eight, as well as the 366 other members of wartime special forces who are commemorated within this box set.

There's another reason. Although the bodies were exhumed in November 1945 (and eventually interred at Durnbach War Cemetery, Germany), no one seemed to know where the actual shooting had taken place. A similar forest junction had been identified as the murder site in the 1980s and a memorial

"THE BOOK'S AUTHOR, WRITING ANONYMOUSLY UNDER THE PSEUDONYM EX-LANCE-CORPORAL X, SERVED IN THE BRITISH ARMY FOR 12 YEARS AND IS THE HOLDER OF THE QUEEN'S GALLANTRY MEDAL (QGM)"



"I'M EXTREMELY PROUD TO HAVE REPAID THAT TRUST, AND OF THE OVERWHELMING FEEDBACK THE BOX SET HAS SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED FROM ALL CORNERS"

Joseph Maurice and Philippe Rousseau, two brothers, both died in the line of duty. Joseph Maurice died serving in Second SAS in 1944

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erected there. However, I was sceptical and eventually was able to locate the exact location through thorough cross-referencing. It's one of the many mysteries solved in this box set, and it seemed appropriate to open with this extract, as part of the profit from sales will help fund a small memorial at this spot, as well as at other forgotten sites where similar crimes took place.

What were your intentions by compiling the *Roll of Honour*? Is it intended as a historical record, a commemoration, or both?

Both. I felt there was a gap in history that needed filling, my aim having been to ensure that every member of the British SAS and the Long Range Desert Group (plus all attached ranks) who lost their lives during WWII is commemorated equally, regardless of military status, social background or honours won.

Moreover, aside from providing information, wartime veterans and next of kin trusted me to produce a fitting tribute that would celebrate the lives of their fellow soldiers, brothers, fathers, uncles and grandfathers. I wanted to complete it while as many of them as possible were still alive to see their friends and loved ones memorialised in this way. I'm extremely proud to have repaid that trust, and of the overwhelming feedback the box set has subsequently received

from all corners. It not only commemorates the men fully, but in doing so also uniquely forms the true history of wartime SAS and LRDG operations, from North Africa to the Aegean and Italy to northwest Europe.

In general, did you find there were any similar traits and backgrounds with men listed in the *Roll of Honour*? Are there any identifiable tropes that might even be in common with special forces soldiers today?

I think we're all full to the brim with the usual SAS Boy's Own melodrama, but there's been absolutely no need for that here. The men's stories speak for themselves and, strikingly, the common denominator is that these were mainly ordinary men with ordinary backgrounds. They came from cities, towns and villages all over the UK, the former Commonwealth and many other countries and, before volunteering for special forces, originated from all three services. They were of all faiths, ethnic backgrounds and political beliefs. From Barnardo's boy to aristocrat, milkman to lawyer,

from those barely out of school to university professors. These are the stories, told for the first time, of regular and territorial soldiers alike, all of whom who were sadly killed in action, posted missing without trace while on operations, who died in accidents or of sickness, those killed while saving others, and those who were shot either while escaping or after capture – ordinary men who volunteered to carry out extraordinary tasks for the sake of others. Their humble but confident attitude is as prevalent today within our special forces as it was then.

The books detail previously unknown casualties, and even detail stories that have only just come to light. What was the process for researching these casualties and filling in the blanks, as it were?

Each of the 374 individual entries are based on years of meticulous cross-referencing of service records, interviews with veterans and next of kin, and operational reports found in collections around the world. I've also visited every grave, these being scattered over 17 different countries, as well as the scene of the men's actions to fully understand the truth.

In addition, I examined the casualty listings for all relevant formations to ensure that any



Above: Captain Easonsmith took this photograph of the SAS after their first raid, named Operation Squatter

Captain John Richard 'Jake' Easonsmith of the LDRG photographed the SAS's first ever raid. He went on to command LRDG and was killed in November 1943



Lieutenant James Desmond Black was one of eight SAS men who were executed by the SS after surrendering in eastern France in September 1944

men left off in the past have now taken their rightful place on this *Roll of Honour*. The fact that some were omitted may come as a surprise, but record keeping was not as it is now. For example, until June 1944, wartime members of the SAS were administered by clerical staff of their parent units, often far from the relevant theatre, and casualties were therefore reported directly to them. In unusual circumstances, such as when men died of wounds long after capture, news of their demise was sometimes not relayed to the regiment.

Such scrupulous research has resulted in proper history, packed with new information and photos, including the only known photograph from the first ever SAS raid, which I came across in a private collection.

Why is it that these accounts have received relatively little attention? Has the secretive nature of the SAS in any way prohibited accurately accounting for and documenting the service records of these men?

Of course, the SAS and LRDG have always commemorated their wartime casualties. Pilgrimages, both private and organised, have honoured them since the end of the war and will continue to do so. However, their individual

“OUT OF THESE TRAGIC STORIES I’M PLEASED TO SAY THERE’S ALREADY BEEN AN UPBEAT AND POSITIVE OUTCOME”

stories have never been published, not for reasons of secrecy but because there has never been the time to do so. The SAS has, for example, been operationally deployed every year bar one since the end of the Second World War and veteran welfare has, quite rightly, taken priority over any such publication.

Many of these accounts are incredibly humbling, brutal and tragic. Personally, is there one story or account that particularly stands out for you, for any reason?

It’s difficult to pull out just one example from the 374 individual entries, but I’ve always found the story of Parachutist James Dowling particularly heart-rending. He was a 17-year-old removal man who, when joining the infantry, lied and increased his age in order to have a better chance of serving abroad. He was a model soldier until going AWOL after being

refused compassionate leave to visit his dying father. Sentenced to 12 months detention, he was released early after expressing his wish to serve in Airborne Forces and subsequently volunteered for Second SAS. His first time on foreign soil was when he parachuted behind the lines into eastern France in early September 1944. Sadly he was one of those shot after capture. If he’d been granted compassionate leave his fate would no doubt have been very different.

100 per cent of profits from sales of the book go to service charities. Could you discuss the work of these charities and why this donation is so important to them?

Out of these tragic stories I’m pleased to say there’s already been an upbeat and positive outcome that I hope to add to. Thanks to all those who have supported the project so far, the first £100,000 has already been donated to Combat Stress, an incredible charity that ensures servicemen and women suffering from PTSD receive much-needed assistance. It will soon receive a further £15,000. I’m also ring-fencing £20,000 to help fund the small memorials already mentioned, where some of the subjects of these three volumes, including James Dowling, were shot after capture.

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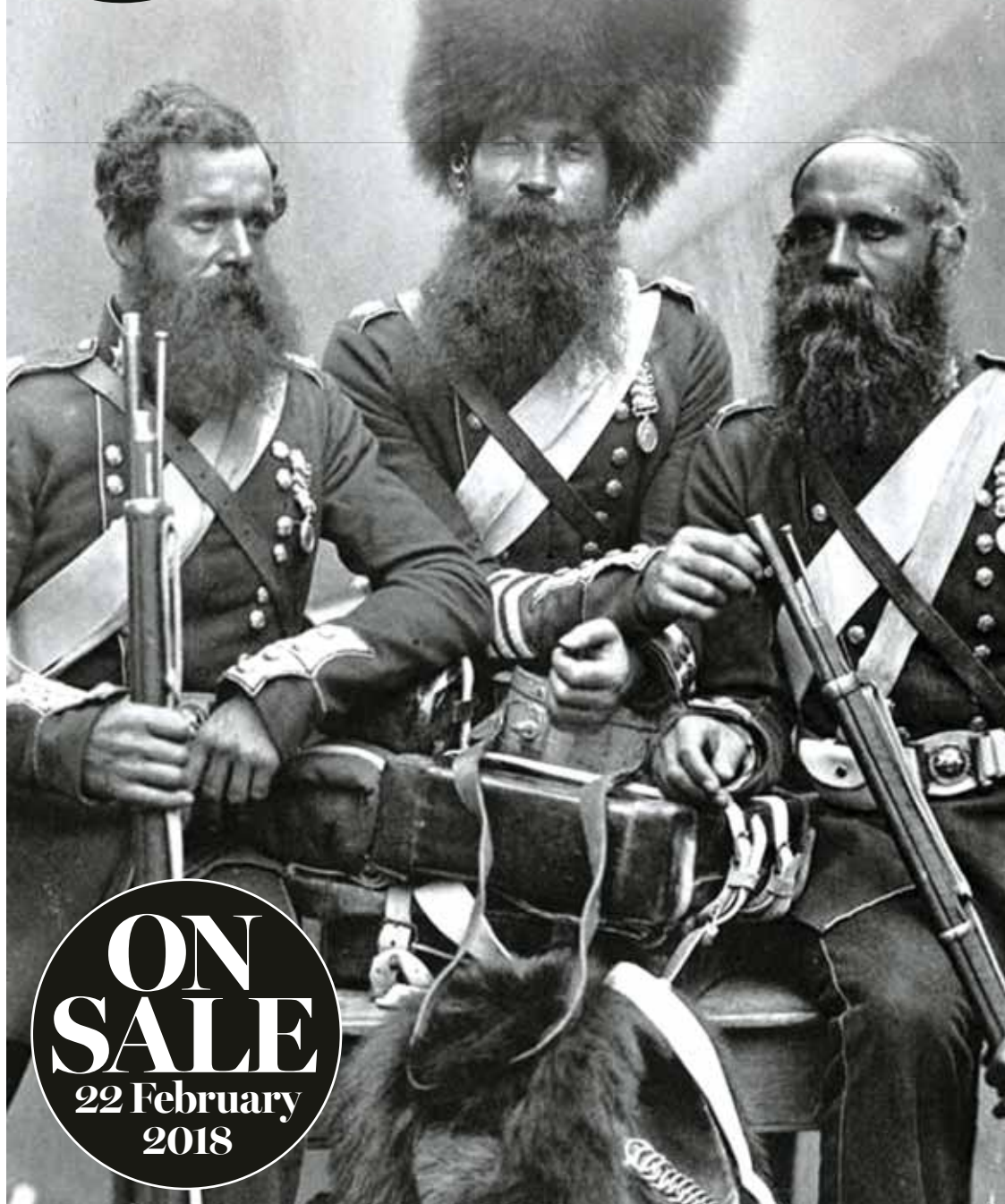
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LAWRENCE OF ARABIA'S ROBE & DAGGER

These iconic items belonged to the complex soldier and writer whose remarkable role during the Arab Revolt earned him international fame

T.E. Lawrence was one of the most legendary figures to emerge from World War I. An Oxford-educated archaeologist, Lawrence was also a British intelligence officer in the Middle East who assisted the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Between 1916-18 Lawrence played a remarkable role uniting Arab tribes under Emir Faisal of Mecca before coordinating widespread guerrilla attacks with British assistance.

Lawrence gifted his robes to an army friend called Arthur Russell in the 1920s, but Russell subsequently had to prevent his mother from making dresses out of them

Unusually for World War I, Lawrence's desert campaign was highly mobile and largely consisted of sabotage missions against the Ottoman Hejaz Railway. Lawrence also fought with the Arab Northern Army, and his efforts culminated in the capture of Damascus on 1 October 1918.

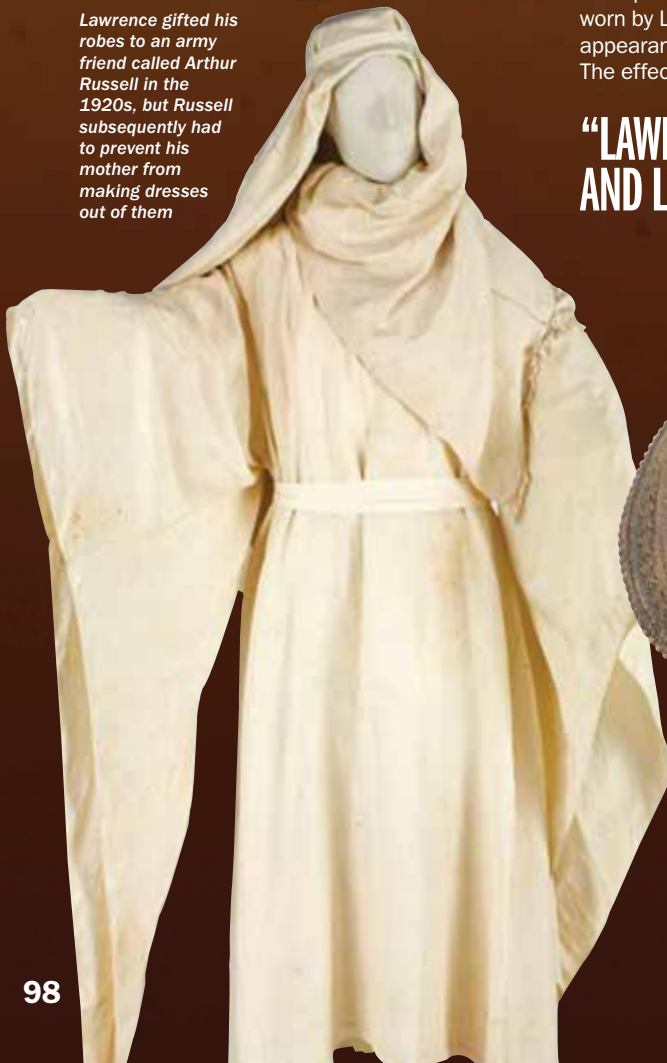
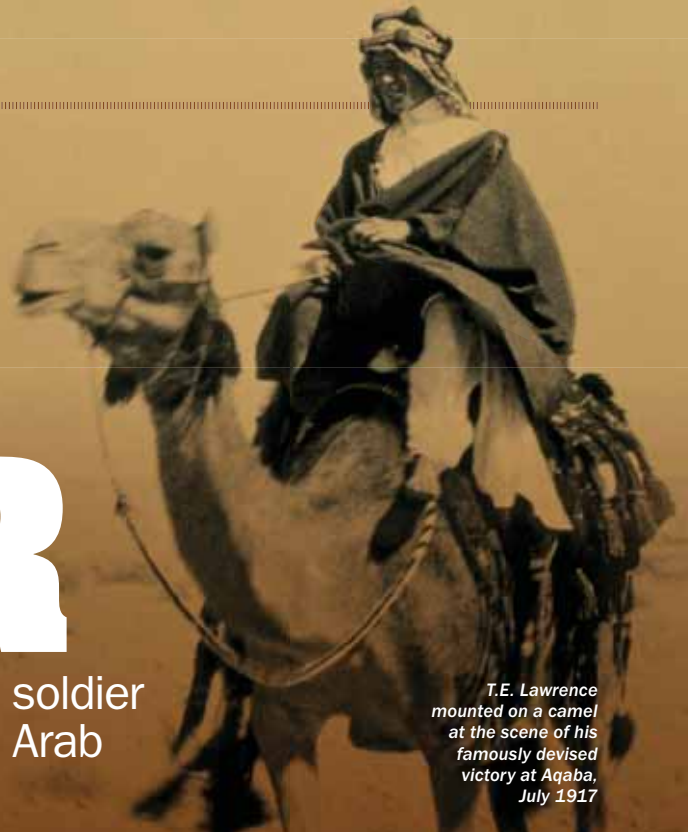
Lawrence achieved much of his success by willingly adopting the cultural habits of his Arab allies. This included living among them, speaking their language and – most famously – adopting their dress. The pictured robe was worn by Lawrence from 1916 and is similar in appearance to the clothes that Emir Faisal wore. The effect would transform the British officer

into an Arab commander, or as Lawrence himself described, "If I wore Meccan clothes, they [the Arabs] would behave to me as though I were really one of their leaders; and I might slip in and out of Faisal's tent without making a sensation."

Also integral to Lawrence's appearance was a distinctive jambiya dagger, which was a customary weapon for Arab men to wear. However, this particular silver and steel dagger is unique to the legend of Lawrence. On 6 July 1917, Arab forces led by Sherif Nasir and Auda Abu Tayi won a famous victory at the Battle of Aqaba following Lawrence's advice. Nasir subsequently presented Lawrence with this dagger as a reward.

"LAWRENCE'S DESERT CAMPAIGN WAS HIGHLY MOBILE AND LARGELY CONSISTED OF SABOTAGE MISSIONS"

T.E. Lawrence mounted on a camel at the scene of his famously devised victory at Aqaba, July 1917



Above: Lawrence later posed with his jambiya dagger and robes for publicity photographs, sculptures and paintings, which enhanced his legendary status

NATIONAL
ARMY
MUSEUM

T.E. Lawrence's robe and dagger are on display in the National Army Museum in Chelsea, London. The museum is open daily from 10.30am-5.30pm (8pm on the first Wednesday of every month).

For more information visit: www.nam.ac.uk



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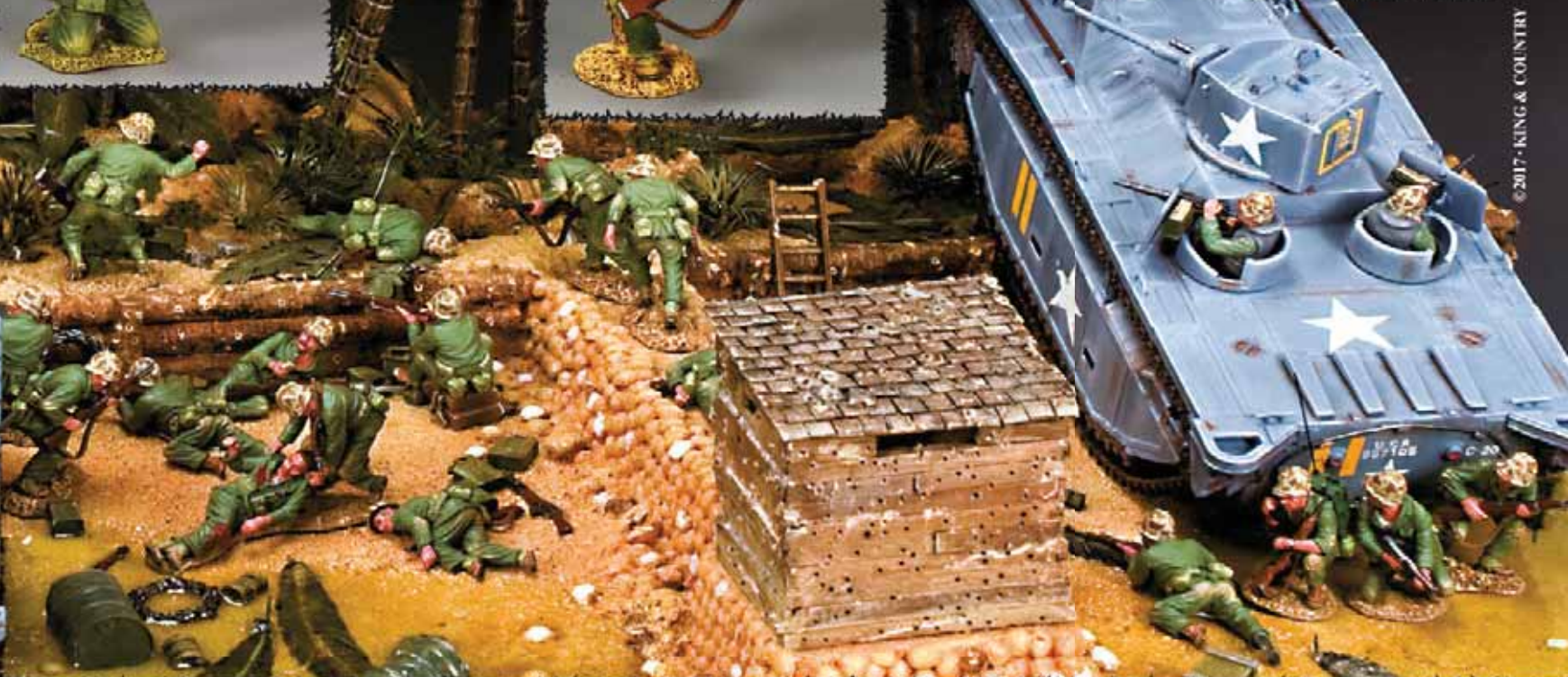


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